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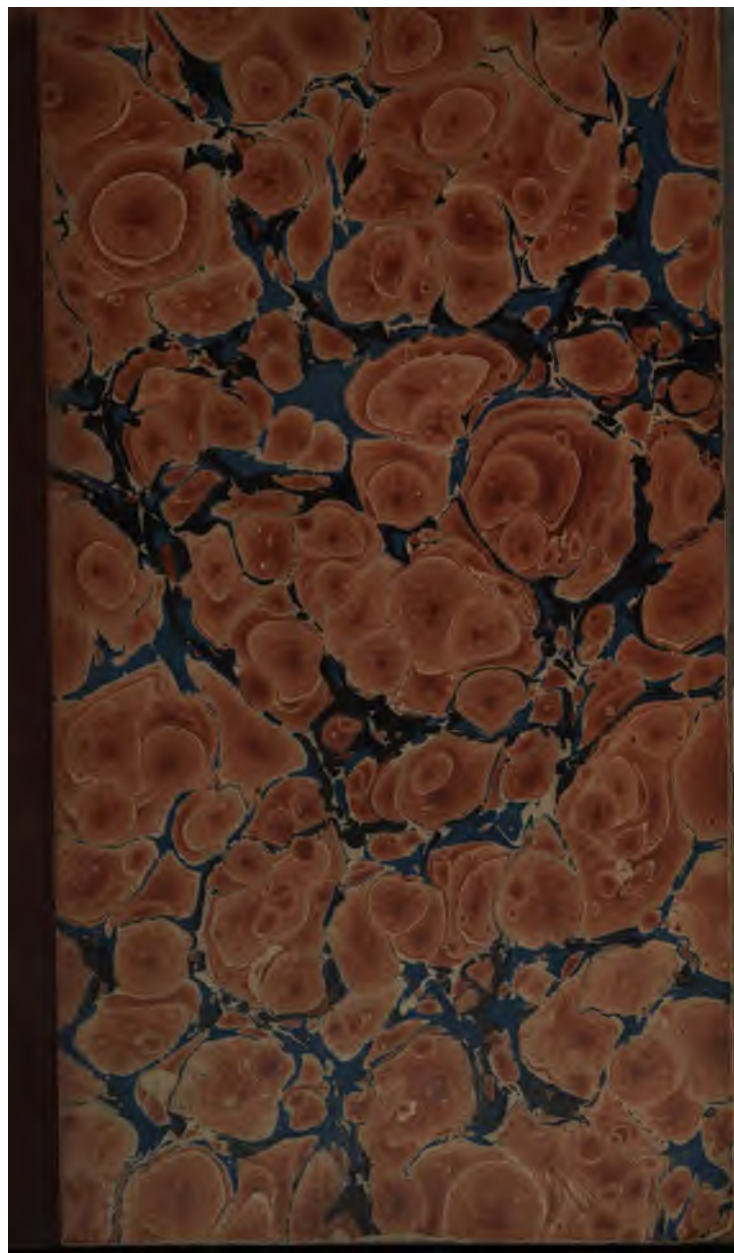
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JOAN OF ARC.

BY LORD MAHON



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Charles VII. and Joan of Arc; from a Monument constructed, 1456, at Orleans.

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JOAN OF ARC.

[QU. REV., No. 139. March, 1842.]

1. *Collection des Chroniques Nationales Françaises.* Par M. Buchon. 36 vols. Paris, 1826.
2. *Collection Complète des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France.* Par M. Petitot, Première Série, 52 vols. Seconde Série, par MM. Petitot et Monmerqué, 78 vols. Paris 1819—1829.
3. *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France.* Par M. Guizot. 30 vols. Paris, 1823—1835.
4. *Archives Curieuses de l'Histoire de France.* Première Série, 15 vols. Seconde Série, 12 vols. Paris, 1834—1841.
5. *Procès de Jeanne d'Arc.* Par Jules Quicherat. Premier tome. Paris, 1841.

IF we compare the progress of historical publications in France and England during the last twenty or thirty years we shall find but little ground for self-gratulation. Our Record Commission comprised most able men: it was animated by the best intentions; but in its results it has brought forth only misshapen and abortive works—all begun apparently without rule or method—scarce any yet completed, and scarce any deserving to be so—all of different forms and sizes—and alike only in the enormous amount of the expense incurred, and the almost utter worthlessness of the information afforded. Never before, according to the farmer's phrase, was there so much cry and so much cost with so little wool. Amongst the French, on the contrary, there

have been—without the need of government grants or government commissions—some well-combined undertakings to collect, arrange, and publish the most valuable documents in their language, from their early chronicles down to their modern memoirs. These have been printed in regular succession, and in one uniform and convenient size, affording to the public a clear and excellent type, combined with a moderate price. We do not pretend to have read at any time all or nearly all the two hundred volumes which our title-page displays. Some of their contents also were known to us from former and separate publications; but so far as our reading in this edition is extended, we have found the biographical introductions clear, critical, and able, and the text, while not overlaid, sufficiently explained, with notes. We think very great praise is due to the various editors, MM. Buchon, Petitot, Monmerqué, and last, not least, that eminent writer no less than statesman, M. Guizot. And we heartily commend these volumes to the purchase and perusal of all who value French history—to the emulation of all who value our own.

To review in a few pages several hundred volumes and several hundred years would be a vain and frivolous attempt. We shall prefer to single out some one period and some one subject, which we shall endeavour to illustrate, not only from the publications now before us, but from whatever other sources may supply. Let us take one of the most remarkable characters in ancient or modern times, Joan of Arc,

the Maid of Orleans. The eighth volume of M. Petitot's 'Collection' contains many ancient documents referring to her history,—an original letter, for example, from the Sire de Laval to his mother, describing her appearance at Court—and some memoirs written, beyond all doubt, by a contemporary, since the writer refers to information which he received from the chiefs at the siege of Orleans: nay, written probably, as M. Petitot conjectures from their abrupt termination, in the very year of that siege.

But these are by no means the only nor the most important documents to be consulted. It is well known that at the trial in 1431 Joan was herself examined at great length, together with many other witnesses. A new trial of "revision," with the view to clear her memory from the stain of the first, was undertaken by order of King Charles in 1456; and at this second trial several of her kinsmen, of her attendants, of her companions in arms, appeared to give their testimony. Now, manuscript copies of all these remarkable depositions exist in the public libraries, both of Paris and Geneva. They have been illustrated by MM. de Laverdy and Lebrun de Charmettes, and more recently by the superior skill of De Barante and Sismondi.* Of these last we shall especially avail ourselves; and by combining and comparing such original records, many of them descending to the most familiar details, and nearly

* De Barante, 'Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne,' vol. v. pp. 270—360, and vol. vi. pp. 1—140; Sismondi, 'Histoire des Français,' vol. xiii. pp. 115—194.

all unknown till more recent times, we hope to make the English reader, at least, better acquainted than he may hitherto have been with the real character and history of the heroine.

Joan was the child of Jacques d'Arc, and of Isabeau Romée his wife, poor villagers of Domremy, on the borders of Lorraine. She had one sister, who appeared to have died in childhood, and three brothers. When asked at her trial what had been her age on first coming to King Charles's Court, she answered nineteen. The good rule of making a large addition to a lady's own declaration of her years does not appear needful in this case: her own declaration was also confirmed by other witnesses; and we may without hesitation fix her birth in 1410 or 1411.* Her education was such as a peasant-girl receives at that time; she was not taught to read or to write but she could spin and sew and repeat her Pater Noster and her Ave-Maria. From her early childhood she was sent forth to tend her father's flocks or herds on the hills. Far from giving signs of any extraordinary hardihood or heroism, she was so bashful as to be put out of countenance whenever spoken to by a stranger. She was known to her neighbours only as a simple-minded and kind-hearted girl, always ready to nurse the sick, or to relieve

* Yet Pasquier (perhaps from a misprint in his book) has altered nineteen to twenty-nine, and this error has misled both Hume and Rapin.

any poor wayfarer whom chance might lead to her village. An ardent piety, however, soon made her an object of remark, and perhaps of ridicule. She was sometimes seen to kneel and pray alone in the fields. She took no pleasure in the pastimes of her young companions ; but as soon as her daily work was over she would rush to the church, and throw herself prostrate with clasped hands before the altar, directing her devotions especially to the Virgin and to Saints Catherine and Margaret, in whose name that church was dedicated. The sacristan declares in his depositions at the trial that she was wont to rebuke him whenever he neglected to ring the bells for the village service, and to promise him a reward if he would for the future do his duty better. Every Saturday, and sometimes oftener, she went in pilgrimage to a small chapel, dedicated to the Virgin, at a little distance from the village. Another spot to which Joan often repaired was a venerable beech, which spread its ancient boughs on the confines of the neighbouring forest of Bois Chenu. At its foot ran a clear streamlet, to whose waters healing powers were ascribed. The tree bore the popular name of "L'Arbre des Dames," or "L'Arbre des Fées," and, according to Joan herself at her trial, several grey-headed crones in the village, and amongst the rest her godmother, pretended to have heard with their own ears fairies discoursing beneath the mysterious shade. But for that very reason the tree was hallowed by Catholic worship, as such spots have ever been, in the dark ages with the view to drive out

the evil spirits, in less credulous times to dispel the superstition from the public mind. Once every year the priest of Domremy, at the head of the elders of the village, walked round the tree in solemn procession, chanting psalms and prayers, while the young people were wont to hang garlands on the boughs, and to dance beneath them until night with lighter minstrelsy,

“or legend old,
Or song heroically bold.”

The times in which the lot of Joan was cast were such as to turn an ardent spirit towards things of earth as well as towards things of heaven. Her young heart beat high with enthusiasm for her native France, now beset and beleagured by the island-strangers. Her young fancy loved to dwell on those distant battles, the din of which might scarcely reach her quiet village, but each apparently hastening the ruin of her father-land. We can picture to ourselves how earnestly the destined heroine—the future leader of armies—might question those chance travellers whom, as we are told, she delighted to relieve, and for whose use she would often resign her own chamber, as to each fresh report from the changeful scene of war. She was ten years of age when the ignominious treaty of Troyes, signed by a monarch of diseased intellect, yielded the succession to the English. She was twelve years of age when that unhappy monarch (Charles VI.) expired, when the infant King of England was proclaimed King of

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France at Paris, at Rouen, and at Bordeaux, when the rightful heir, the Dauphin (but few as yet would term him Charles VII.), could only hold his little Court in the provinces beyond the Loire. In 1423 came the news of the defeat of Crevant; in 1424 the flower of French and Scottish chivalry fell at Verneuil; in 1425 La Hire and his brave companions were driven from Champagne. A brief respite was indeed afforded to Charles by the recall of the Regent Duke of Bedford, to quell the factions at home, and by some difference which arose between him and his powerful kinsman and ally the Duke of Burgundy. But all these feuds were now composed, and Bedford had returned, eager to carry the war beyond the Loire, and to crush the last hopes of the "Armagnacs," as Charles's adherents were termed, from the prevailing party at his Court. Had Bedford succeeded—had the diadems of France and England been permanently united on the same head—it is hard to say which of the two nations would have had the greater reason for regret.

Remote as was the situation of Domremy, it could not wholly escape the strife or the sufferings of those evil times. All the people of that village, with only one exception, were zealous Armagnacs; some of their neighbours, on the contrary, were no less zealous Burgundians. So strong was Joan of Arc's attachment to the King, that, according to her own avowal, she used to wish for the death of his one disloyal subject at Domremy. When Charles's lieutenants had been driven from Champagne, the fathers

and she began to fancy that she saw the visions and heard the voices of her guardian saints, calling on her to re-establish the throne of France, and expel the foreign invaders. It is probable that a constitution which, though robust and hardy, was in some points imperfect, may have contributed in no small degree to the phantoms and illusions of her brain.* She said on her trial that she was thirteen years of age when these apparitions began. The first, according to her own account, took place in her father's garden, and at the hour of noon, when she suddenly saw a brilliant light shining in her eyes, and heard an unknown voice bidding her continue a good girl, and promising that God would bless her. The second apparition, some time afterwards, when she was alone, tending her flock in the fields, had become much more defined to her view, and precise in its injunctions; some majestic forms floated before her; some mysterious words reached her ears, of France to be delivered by her aid.† Gradually these forms resolved themselves into those of St. Catherine and St. Margaret, while the third, from whom the voice seemed to come, and who looked, as she says, "a true worthy" (*un vray preud'homme*),

* *Sexus sui infirmitates semper usque ad mortem afuisse constat.*—Sismondi, 'Histoire des Français,' vol. xiii. p. 117.

† It is plain, however, that Joan, in the account she gave at her trial of this second apparition, unconsciously transferred to it some circumstances that, according to her own view of the case, must have been of several years' later date. A promise "de faire lever le siège d'Orléans" could not be given until after the siege had begun, which it was not until October, 1428. Now, her second vision, as she states it, must have been about 1424.—Collection, vol. viii. p. 238.

announced himself to her as Michael the Archangel. "I saw him," she said to her judges, "with these eyes, as plainly as I see you now." In another part of her trial, when again questioned on the same subject, she answered—"Yes, I do believe firmly, as firmly as I believe in the Christian faith, and that God has redeemed us from the pains of hell, that those voices came from Him, and by His command." Her own sincerity and strength of belief are, indeed, beyond doubt or cavil: it was this feeling alone that could animate her to such lofty deeds, or support her in so dismal a death.

It is alleged by Joan herself that she was struck with affright at the first of these visions (*eut moult paour de ce*), but that the following ones filled her with ecstasy and rapture. "When the saints were disappearing I used to weep and beseech I might be borne away with them, and after they had disappeared I used to kiss the earth on which they had rested." Sometimes she spoke of her celestial monitors as *mes Voix*, and sometimes gave them the reverential title of *Messire*; and, in gratitude for such signs of heavenly favour, she vowed to herself that she would consecrate her maiden state to God.

Meanwhile, however, she was growing up in comeliness and beauty, and found favour in the sight of an honest yeoman, who sought her in marriage, and whose suit was warmly pressed by her parents. Joan steadily refused. The rustic lover, having soon exhausted his scanty stock of rhetoric, had recourse to a singular expedient: he pretended that

she had made him a promise of marriage, and cited her before the *Official* at Toul to compel her to perform her engagement. The Maid went herself to Toul, and undertook her own defence, when, having declared on oath that she had never made any such promise, the *Official* gave sentence in her favour.

Her parents, displeased at her stubborn refusal, and unable to comprehend—nor did she dare to reveal to them—her motives, held her, as she says, “in great subjection.” They were also much alarmed at the strange hints which she let fall to others on the mission which she believed had been intrusted to her from on high. Several of these hints are recorded by the persons to whom they were addressed, the witnesses in the trial of 1456. She said to that inhabitant of Domremy whose death she had desired to see because he did not favour the Dauphin, “Gossip, if you were not a Burgundian, I could tell you something.” To another neighbour she exclaimed, “There is now between Colombey and Vaucouleurs a maid who will cause the King of France to be crowned!” She frequently said that it was needful for her to proceed into France.* Honest Jacques and Isabeau felt no other fear than that their daughter’s ardent imagination might be practised upon by some men-at-arms, and she be

* At that time the name of *France* was reserved for those provinces only which formed the Crown domain. The other provinces, when mentioned collectively, were called “*Royaume de France*.”—*Supplément aux Mémoires de Jeanne d’Arc*, Collection, vol. viii. p. 248.

and follow them to the end. I think such a thing would be," said she to her father. "I would sooner die than be a traitor. And if you did not, I would willingly do so."

The English, driven by her visions, and the restrictions imposed by her sex and station, might have struggled to mastery in the mind of Joan, had it not been quickened and brought into action by a crisis in political affairs. The Duke of Bedford, having returned to France, and mustered large reinforcements from Burgundy, sent forth a mighty army against Charles. Its command he intrusted to the valiant Earl of Salisbury, under whom fought Sir John Talbot, Sir John Fastolf, Sir William Gladsdale, captains of high renown. Salisbury, having first reduced Rambouillet, Pithiviers, Jargeau, Sully, and other small towns, which yielded with slight or no resistance, proceeded to the main object of his enterprise, the siege of Orleans—a city commanding the passage of the Loire and the entrance into the southern provinces, and the most important, both from its size and its situation, of any that the French yet retained. Here, then, it was felt on all sides, must the last struggle for the French monarchy be made. Orleans once subdued, the troops of Bedford might freely spread over the open country beyond the Loire, and the Court of Charles must seek shelter in the mountains of Auvergne or of Dauphiné. To this scene, then, the eyes not only of France and of England, but of all Europe, were turned; on this

ground, as on the *champclos* of ancient knights and paladins, had been narrowed the conflict for sovereignty on the one side, for independence on the other.

It was in the month of October, 1428, that Orleans was first invested by the Earl of Salisbury. But his design had been previously foreseen, and every exertion made both by the French King and by the inhabitants themselves to provide for a long and resolute defence. A brave officer, the Sire de Gaucourt, had been appointed governor, and two of the principal captains of that age, Pothon de Xaintrailles and Dunois, a bastard of the Royal branch of Orleans, threw themselves into the place with a large body of followers. The citizens on their part showed a spirit that might have done honour to soldiers; not only did they largely tax themselves for their own defence, but many brought to the common stock a larger sum than had been imposed on them; they cheerfully consented that their suburb of Portereau, on the southern bank, opposite the city, should be razed to the ground, lest it should afford any shelter to the enemy, and from the same motive all the vineyards and gardens within two miles from the walls were laid waste by the owners themselves. The men able to bear arms were enrolled in bands, and the rest formed themselves into processions solemnly to bear the holy relics from church to church, and to implore with unceasing prayer the mercy and protection of Heaven.

The first assault of Salisbury was directed again

the bulwark defending the approaches of the bridge on the southern bank, or, as we should call it at present, the *tête-de-pont*. After a stubborn resistance and great bloodshed, he dislodged the townspeople from the place. They then took post at two towers which had been built one on each side the passage, some way forward upon the bridge, and they took care for the security of the city to break down one of the arches behind them, and only kept up their communication by planks and beams which could be readily removed. The next day, however, Sir William Gladsdale, one of the best officers in the English army, finding the waters of the Loire unusually shallow at that season, waded with his men nearly up to the towers, and succeeded in storming them. He proceeded to build a bulwark connecting the two towers, and joined them with the *tête-de-pont* on the shore, thus forming a fort, which he called from them La Bastille des Tournelles, and which enabled him to plant a battery full against the city. But his activity proved fatal to his chief. A very few days afterwards the Earl of Salisbury came to visit the works. He had ascended one of the towers with Sir William, to survey more clearly the wide circuit of the enemy's walls, when a cannon-ball fired from them (for this, as Hume observes, is among the first sieges where cannon were found to be of importance) broke a splinter from the casement, and struck on his face with a mortal wound. At his decease the Earl of Suffolk succeeded to his command, though not to his full influence and authority. Having tried

in several attacks the great number of the besieged, as well as their stubborn resolution, he determined to turn the siege into a blockade, to surround the city with forts or "bastilles," and to reduce it by famine. The works for this purpose were continued steadily throughout the winter. Frequent assaults on the one side, frequent sallies on the other, proved the fiery ardour of the besiegers and the unfailing constancy of the besieged. In the unfinished state of the English works, supplies and reinforcements could still at intervals be brought into Orleans, and as the French light troops ravaged the open country beyond, it sometimes happened that there was no less dearth and scarcity in the English camp than in the beleaguered city. But upon the whole, both the stores and the garrison of Orleans wasted away much faster than they could be renewed; they saw tower after tower, and redoubt after redoubt, rising up to complete the line—each a link in the long chain which was to bind them; they perceived that, while they declined, the English were gradually growing in strength and numbers; and it became evident, even to themselves, that unless some great effort could be made for their deliverance, they must be overpowered in the ensuing spring.

It was the news of this siege that kindled to the highest pitch the fervent imagination of Joan of Arc. Her enthusiasm, as we have seen, was twofold, political and religious. The former would impel her to free King Charles from his present and pressing danger, the latter to sanctify his claim by

his coronation. For, until his head had been encircled with the ancient crown and anointed with the holy oil at Rheims, Charles was not truly King to priestly or to popular eyes, but only Dauphin—not the real possessor, only the rightful heir. From this time, then, the visions of Joan, hitherto unsettled and wavering, steadily fixed on two objects which she believed herself commissioned from Heaven to achieve—to raise the siege of Orleans, and to crown the Dauphin at Rheims. And if we compare the greatness and the difficulty of such objects with the sex, the station, and the years of the person aiming at them, we cannot but behold with admiration the undaunted intrepidity that did not quail from such a task.

The scheme of Joan was to go to the neighbouring town of Vaucouleurs, reveal her visions to the governor, Robert de Baudricourt, a zealous adherent of Charles, and entreat his aid and protection for enabling her to reach the King's presence. From her parents she was well aware that she could expect no encouragement. Her first step, therefore, was, on the plea of a few days' visit, to repair to the house of her uncle Durand Laxart, who lived at the village of Petit Burey, between Domremy and Vaucouleurs. To him she then imparted all her inspirations and intentions. The astonishment of the honest villager may be easily imagined. But the energy and earnestness of Joan wrought so powerfully on his *mind as to* convince him of the truth of her mission, *and he undertook* to go in her place to Vaucouleurs,

and do her bidding with the Sire de Baudricourt. His promises of divine deliverance by the hands of a peasant-girl were, however, received by the stern old warrior with the utmost contempt and derision: "Box your niece's ears well," said he, "and send her home to her father." *

Far from being disconcerted at her uncle's ill success, the Maid immediately set out herself for Vaucouleurs in company with Laxart. It was with some difficulty that she could obtain admission to the Governor, or a patient hearing from him even when admitted to his presence. Baudricourt, unmoved by her eloquence, continued to set at nought her promises and her requests. But Joan now displayed that energy and strength of will which so seldom fail to triumph where success is possible. She resolved to remain at Vaucouleurs, again and again appealing to the Governor, and conjuring him not to neglect the voice of God, who spoke through her, and passing the rest of her time in fervent prayers at the church. Once she went back for a little time with her uncle to his village, but she soon induced him to return; another time she had determined to begin with him and on foot her journey of one hundred and fifty leagues to the French Court. On further reflection, however, she felt unwilling to proceed without at least a letter from Baudricourt. At length he consented to write, and refer the question of her journey to the decision of King Charles.

* *Collection des Mémoires*, vol. viii. p. 246.

Upon his own mind she had made little or no impression, but several other persons in the town, struck with her piety and perseverance, became converts to her words. One of these was a gentleman named Jean de Novelompont, and surnamed De Metz, who afterwards deposed on oath to these transactions:—" 'Child,' said he, as he met her in the street, 'what are you doing here? Must we not submit to seeing the King expelled his kingdom, and to ourselves becoming English?' 'I am come here,' said the Maid, 'to ask of the Sire de Baudricourt to send me before the Dauphin: he has no care for me, or for words of mine; and yet it is needful that before Mid-Lent I should stand in the Dauphin's presence, should I even in reaching him wear through my feet, and have to crawl upon my knees. For no one upon this earth, neither King, nor Duke, nor daughter of King of Scots,* no one but myself is appointed to recover this realm of France. Yet I would more willingly remain to spin by the side of my poor mother, for war seems no work for me. But go I must, because the Lord my Master so wills it.' 'And who is the Lord your Master?' said Jean de Metz. 'The King of Heaven,' she replied. De Metz declared that her tone of inspiration had convinced him; he gave her his hand, and promised her that he would, on the

* There was pending at that time a negotiation for a marriage between the Dauphin Louis, son of Charles VII., and the daughter of the King of Scots, who promised to send fresh succours.—See a note to the 'Collection des Mémoires,' vol. viii. p. 249.

faith of a gentleman, and under the conduct of God, lead her himself before the King. He asked her when she desired to begin her journey: 'To-day rather than to-morrow,' replied the heroine."*

Another gentleman, Bertrand de Poulengy, who has also left a deposition on oath to these facts, and who had been present at the first interview between Joan and Baudricourt, became convinced of her divine commission, and resolved to escort her in her journey. It does not clearly appear whether Baudricourt had received any answer from the Court of France; but a reluctant assent to the journey was extorted from him by the entreaties of De Metz and Poulengy, and by the rising force of popular opinion. The Duke of Lorraine himself had by this time heard of the fame of Joan; and sent for her as to one endowed with supernatural powers to cure him of a mortal disease. But Joan replied, with her usual simplicity of manner, that her mission was not to that Prince, nor for such an object, and the Duke dismissed her with a gift of four livres.

This gift was probably the more welcome, since Baudricourt, even while giving his consent to her journey, refused to incur any cost on behalf of it; he presented to her nothing but a sword, and at parting said to her only these words: "Go then—happen what may!" Her uncle, assisted by another countryman, had borrowed money to buy a horse for

* Dépositions de Jean de Metz au Procès de Révision.

her use, and the expenses of the journey were defrayed by Jean de Metz, for which, as appears by the Household Books, he was afterwards reimbursed by the King. Joan herself, by command of her "Voices," as she said, assumed male apparel, and never wore any other during the remainder of her expedition.

At the news that their daughter was already at Vaucouleurs and going forward to the wars, Jacques d'Arc and his wife hastened in the utmost consternation from their village, but could not succeed in withholding her. "I saw them in the town," says Jean de Metz; "they seemed hard-working, honest, God-fearing people." Joan herself declared in her examinations that they had been almost distracted with grief at her departure, but that she had since sent back letters to them, and that they had forgiven her. It would appear that none of her brothers was amongst her companions on this journey, although one of them, Pierre d'Arc, soon afterwards joined her in Touraine.*

* "It has been said that Pierre d'Arc, third brother of Joan, set out with her for France, and that opinion was founded on the fact that Pierre, in a petition presented to the Duke of Orleans in 1444, represents himself to have 'left his own country to serve in the wars of the King and of Monsieur le Duc in company with *Jehanne la Pucelle*, his sister.' But the equivocal construction of this sentence still leaves the point in doubt whether the young man set out at the same time with his sister, or rejoined her at a later period. The chronicles and the depositions make no mention of him either at her departure, during her journey, or upon her arrival at Chinon. Thus, then, there is every reason to believe that he was not with her on her journey."—('Suppl. aux Mémoires,' Collection, vol. viii. p. 253.) This conclusion is confirmed, and indeed placed beyond doubt, by an

Joan set forth from Vaucouleurs on the first Sunday in Lent, the 13th of February, 1429. Her escort consisted of six persons, the Sires de Metz and de Poulengy, with one attendant of each, Colet de Vienne, who is styled a King's messenger, and Richard, a King's archer. It was no slight enterprise to pass through so wide a tract of hostile country, exposed to fall in every moment with wandering parties of English or Burgundian soldiery, or obliged, in order to avoid them, to ford large rivers, to thread extensive forests, and to select unfrequented by-paths at that wintry season. The Maid herself took little heed of toil or danger; her chief complaint was that her companions would not allow her to stop every morning to hear Mass. They, on the contrary, felt from time to time their confidence decline, and strange misgivings arise in their minds; more than once the idea occurred to them that after all they might only be conducting a mad woman or a sorceress, and they were tempted to hurl her down some stone-quarry as they passed, or to leave her alone upon the road. Joan, however, happily surmounting these dangers, both from her enemies and from her escort, succeeded in crossing the Loire at Gien, after which she found herself on friendly ground. There she openly announced to all she met that she was sent from God to crown the King and to free the good city of Orleans. The

original letter from the Sire de Laval, in May, 1429, which we shall hereafter have occasion to quote; it mentions Pierre d'Arc as having arrived to join his sister only eight days before.

tidings began to spread, even to Orleans itself; and, as drowning men are said to catch at straws, so the poor besieged, now hard-pressed and well nigh hopeless, eagerly welcomed this last faint gleam for their deliverance.

On earthly succour they could indeed no longer rely. While Joan was yet delayed at Vaucouleurs, they had been urging the King in repeated embassies to afford them some assistance. It was with difficulty that Charles could muster an army of 3000 men—so dispirited were his soldiers, and so unwilling to serve!—whose command he intrusted to his kinsman the Count of Clermont. On these troops approaching Orleans they were joined by Dunois and another thousand men from the garrison, and they resolved to intercept a large convoy of provisions which Sir John Fastolf was escorting from Paris. Fastolf had under his command scarcely more than 2000 soldiers; nevertheless, in the action which ensued the French were completely routed, and left 500 dead upon the field. This engagement was fought on the 12th of February, the day before Joan commenced her journey from Vaucouleurs, and was called the “Battle of Herrings,” because the provisions brought by Fastolf were chiefly salt-fish for the use of the English army during Lent.

To retrieve a disaster so shameful—to raise again spirits sunk so low—seemed to require the aid either of a hero or a prophet. Charles VII. was certainly *not the former*. He was then scarcely twenty-seven years of age, and had never yet evinced either states-

manlike decision or military ardour. Devoted to pleasure, he shunned the tumult of even his own cities for a residence, and preferred some lonely castle, such as Mehun-sur-Yevre, where he had received the tidings of his accession, or Chinon, where at this time he held his court, and willingly devolved the cares of state upon his council or upon some favourite minister. Such a favourite, even when not selected by his own friendship, was always retained by his indolence and aversion to change. It had already more than once happened, that, on the murder of one minion, Charles had quietly accepted a new one from the hands of the murderer, and shortly become as devoted to him as to the last. He appears to have had the easy and yielding temper of our own Charles II.—a temper which mainly proceeds from dislike of trouble, but which superficial observers ascribe to kindness of heart. Yet his affable and graceful manners might often, as in the case of Charles II., supply in popular estimation the want of more sterling qualities. Once, when giving a splendid festival, he asked the opinion upon it of La Hire, one of his bravest captains. “I never yet,” replied the veteran, “saw a kingdom so merrily lost.” Yet it seldom happened that the state of his exchequer could admit of such a taunt. On another occasion it is related, that when the same La Hire came with Pothon de Xaintrailles to partake of his good cheer, the High Steward could *provide nothing* for the Royal Banquet beyond two *chickens* and one small piece of mutton! The st

is thus told by a quaint old poet, Martial of Paris, in his *Vigiles de Charles le Septiesme* :—

“ Un jour que La Hire et Pothon
Le veindre voir pour festoyement
N’avoit qu’une queue de mouton
Et deux poulets tant seulement.
Las ! cela est bien aux rebours
De ces viandes delicieuses,
Et des mets qu’on a tous les jours,
En depenses trop somptueuses.”

Charles himself was but slightly moved by such vicissitudes, enjoying pleasures when he could, and enduring poverty when he must; but never as yet stirred by his own distresses, or still less by his people’s sufferings, into any deeds of energy and prowess. It is true that at a later period he cast aside his lethargy, and shone forth both a valiant general and an able ruler; but of this sudden and remarkable change, which Sismondi fixes about the year 1439,* no token appears during the life of Joan of Arc.

At the news of the battle of Herrings, joined to so many previous reverses and discouragements, several of Charles’s courtiers were of opinion that he should leave Orleans to its fate—retire with the remains of his forces into the provinces of Dauphiné or Languedoc—and maintain himself to the utmost amidst their mountainous recesses. Happily for

* *Histoire des Français*, vol. xiii. p. 344. He calls it “ a strange phenomenon in the human mind.”

France, at this crisis less timid counsels prevailed. The main merit of these has been ascribed by some historians, and by every poet, to the far-famed Agnes Sorel.

“It was fortunate for *this good prince*,” says Hume—he means Charles VII.—“that, as he lay under the dominion of the fair, the women whom he consulted had the spirit to support his sinking resolution in this desperate extremity. . . . Mary of Anjou, his Queen, a princess of great merit and prudence, vehemently opposed this measure. . . . His mistress, too, the fair Agnes Sorel, seconded all her remonstrances, and threatened that, if he thus pusillanimously threw away the sceptre of France, she would seek in the Court of England a fortune more correspondent to her wishes.”

More recently, the great dramatist of Germany has considerably improved the story, by suppressing the fact that Charles was already married, and making him proffer his hand and his crown to the lovely Agnes.

“She might adorn
The fairest throne on earth, but she disdains it.
My paramour she is, and by that name
Alone doth she desire to be called.” *

We feel reluctant to assist in dispelling an illusion over which the poetry of Schiller has thus thrown the magic tints of genius. Yet it is, we fear, as certain as historical records can make it, that it was not till the year 1431, after the death of Joan of Arc, that Agnes Sorel appeared at Court, or was even seen by

* Schiller, ‘The Maid of Orleans,’ act i. scene 4.

Charles. It is not improbable that the change in his character after 1439 may have proceeded from her influence; such at least was the belief of Francis I., when he wrote beneath her picture these lines;—

“Gentille Agnes, plus d’honneur tu merites
La cause étant de France recouvrer,
Que ce que peut dedans un cloître ouvrer
Close nonain ou bien devot ermite.”

But even this opinion it would not be easy to confirm from contemporary writers.

Any romantic legend or popular tradition may be readily welcomed by a poet to adorn his tale, without any nice inquiry as to its falsehood or its truth. But we may notice, in passing, another departure of Schiller from the facts, without any motive of poetical beauty to explain and to excuse it. He has transferred the position of Chinon to the northern bank of the Loire, and made the passage of that river the signal of retreat towards the southern provinces,* evidently conceiving the place to be Château Chinon, a town some fifty leagues distant, in the ancient Duchy of Burgundy, in the modern Department of Nièvre. But no English reader—no English traveller—will thus lightly mistake the

* Act i. scene 5. ‘The Court at Chinon:’—

“We will across the Loire,

And meekly yield to Heaven’s high chastening hand.”

And again, scene 7:—

“Do not grieve, my Agnes—

Beyond the Loire there lies another France;

Our course is to a happier clime.”

favourite resort of our own Henry II.—of our own Richard Cœur de Lion. Long will they love to trace along the valley of the Loire, between Tours and Saumur, on the last of the bordering hills, the yet proud though long since forsaken and mouldering battlements of Chinon. Ascending the still unbroken feudal towers, a glowing and glorious prospect spreads before them—a green expanse of groves and vineyards, all blending into one—the clear mountain stream of Vienne sparkling and glancing through the little town at their feet—while, more in the distance, they survey, winding in ample folds, and gemmed with many an islet, the wide waters of the Loire. They will seek to recognise, amidst the screen of hills which there encircles it, the neighbouring spire of Fontevrault, where lie interred the Second Henry and his lion-hearted son. They will gaze with fresh delight on the ever-living landscape, when they remember the departed great who loved to gaze on it before. Nor, amidst these scenes of historic glory or of present loveliness, will any national prejudice, or passion, or ill-will (may God in his goodness dispel it from both nations!), forbid them many a lingering look to that ruined hall,—the very one, as tradition tells us, where the Maid of Orleans was first received by Charles!

It was not, however, to the castle of Chinon that Joan in the first instance repaired. She stopped short within a few leagues of it, at the village of St. Catherine de Fierbois, and sent forward to the King to announce her arrival and her object. The permis-

sion to proceed to an hostelry at Chinon was readily accorded her; not so admission to the King. Two days were spent in deliberation by Charles's counsellors. Some of them imagined that Joan might be a sorceress and emissary of Satan; by some she was supposed to be a brain-sick enthusiast; while others thought that, in this their utmost need, no means of deliverance, however slight or unpromising, should be rashly cast aside. At length, as a compromise between all these views, a commission was appointed to receive her answers to certain interrogatories. Their report proved favourable; and meanwhile several other lords of the Court, whom curiosity led to visit her, came back much struck with her natural eloquence, with her high strain of inspiration, and with her unaffected fervour of piety. No sign of imposture appeared in any of her words or deeds; she passed whole days in prayers at the church, and everything in her demeanour bore the stamp of an earnest and undoubting conviction which gradually impressed itself on those around her. Charles still wavered: after some further delay, however, he appointed an hour to receive her. The hour came, and the poor peasant-girl of Domremy was ushered into the stately hall of Chinon, lighted up with fifty torches, and thronged with hundreds of knights and nobles. The King had resolved to try her; and for that purpose he stood amongst the crowd in plain attire, while some of his courtiers magnificently clad held the upper place. *He had not reflected that, considering the*

enthusiasm of Joan for his cause, she had probably more than once seen a portrait or heard a description of his features. Unabashed at the glare of the lights, or the gaze of the spectators, the Maid came forward with a firm step, singled out the King at the first glance, and bent her knee before him with the words—"God give you good life, gentle King." "I am not the King; he is there," said Charles, pointing to one of his nobles. "In the name of God," she exclaimed, "it is no other but yourself. Most noble Lord Dauphin, I am Joan the Maid, sent on behalf of God to aid you and your kingdom; and by his command I announce to you that you shall be crowned in the city of Rheims, and shall become his lieutenant in the realm of France." "Gentle Dauphin," she added shortly afterwards, "why will you not believe me? I tell you that God has pity upon you, upon your kingdom, and upon your people; for St. Louis and Charlemagne are on their knees before him, praying for you and for them." Charles then drew her aside, and, after some time passed in earnest conversation, declared to his courtiers that the Maid had spoken of secrets known only to himself and to God. Several of the ancient chronicles refer mysteriously to this secret between the Maid and the King, but Charles afterwards revealed it in confidence to the Sire de Boissy, one of his favourites.* Joan, it

* De Boissy repeated the story to N. Sala, "*pannetier du Dauphin*," whose MS. account of it is preserved at the Bibliothèque Royale, and quoted in the '*Supplément des Mémoires*.'—Collection, vol. viii. p. 262.

appears, had said to him these words; "I tell you, on behalf of Messire, that you are the true and real heir of France." Now the King, when alone in his oratory a little time before, had offered up a prayer for Divine assistance on condition only of his being the rightful heir to the crown. Such a coincidence of ideas on so obvious a topic seems very far from supernatural or even surprising.

Nor indeed does it appear that this marvel, if marvel it were, had wrought any strong impression on the mind of Charles himself. Within a very few days he had relapsed into his former doubts and misgivings as to Joan's pretended mission. In fact, it will be found, though not hitherto noticed, yet as applying to the whole career of the Maid of Orleans, that the ascendancy which she acquired was permanent only with the mass of the people or of the army, while those who saw her nearer, and could study her more closely, soon felt their faith in her decline. On further observation they might, no doubt, admire more and more her high strain of patriotism and of piety; but they found her, as was natural, utterly unacquainted with war or politics, and guileless as one of her own flock in worldly affairs. Even an old chronicler of the time has these words: "It was a marvellous thing how she could thus demean herself and do so much in these wars; for in all other things she was the most simple shepherdess that was ever seen."* But the crowd which

* *Memoirs concerning the Maid* (Collection, vol. viii. p. 153).

gazed at her from a distance began to espy something more than human, and to circulate and credit reports of her miraculous powers. Her journey of one hundred and fifty leagues, in great part through a hostile country, without being met by a single enemy, or arrested by a single obstacle, was urged as a plain proof of Divine support. Again, it was pretended that Baudricourt had not given his consent to the journey until she had announced to him that her countrymen were sustaining a defeat even while she spoke, and until he had received news of the battle of Herrings, fought on that very day—a story, we may observe in passing, which a mere comparison of the dates is sufficient to disprove.—Another little incident that befell the Maid at Chinon greatly added to her reputation. As she was passing by, a soldier had addressed to her some ribald jest, for which she had gently reproved him, saying that such words ill became any man who might be so near his end. It happened that on the same afternoon this soldier was drowned in attempting to ford the river, and the reproof of Joan was immediately invested by popular apprehension with the force of prophecy.*

To determine the doubts of his council and his own, Charles resolved, before he took any decision, to conduct the Maid before the University and Parliament of Poitiers. There, accordingly, Joan underwent a long and learned cross-examination from several doctors of theology. Nothing could

* *Deposition of Father Pasquerel at the Trial of Revision.*

make her swerve from her purpose, or vary in her statements. "I know neither A nor B," she said, "but I am commanded by my Voices, on behalf of the King of Heaven, to raise the siege of Orleans, and to crown the Dauphin at Rheims." "And pray what language do your Voices speak?" asked one of the doctors, Father Seguin from Limoges, and in a strong Limousin accent. "Better than yours," she answered quickly. It is to be observed, that she never claimed—while the people were so ready to ascribe to her—any gift of prophecy or miracle beyond her mission. When the doctors asked her for a sign, she replied, that it was not at Poitiers but at Orleans that she was appointed to give a sign, and that her only sign should be to lead brave men to battle.

The general result of these examinations was, however, highly favourable to the Maid; and some friars, who had been despatched for that purpose to Vaucouleurs, brought back no less satisfactory reports of her early life. Nor did the theological tribunal disdain a prophecy current among the people, and ascribed to Merlin; it purported that the realm of France should be rescued by a maiden. Even in the remote village of Domremy some vague report of this prediction had been heard: it was appealed to by Joan herself at Vaucouleurs; and was, no doubt, one of the causes to kindle her ardent imagination. But on referring to the very words of the Latin prophecy, they were considered as of striking application to her especial case. The pro-

mised heroine was to come E NEMORE CANUTO—and the name of the forest around Domremy was Bois Chenu ; she was to ride triumphant over ARCI TENENTES—and this word seemed to denote the English, always renowned in the middle ages for their superior skill as bowmen.

There was another examination on which great stress was laid by the people, and probably by the doctors also ; it being the common belief in that age that the devil could form no compact with a person wholly undefiled. But the Queen of Sicily, mother of Charles's consort, and other chief ladies of the Court, having expressed their satisfaction on this point, the doctors no longer hesitated to give their answers to the King. They did not, indeed, as Hume supposes, "pronounce the mission of Joan undoubted and supernatural;" on the contrary, they avoided any express opinion on that subject: but they declared that they had observed nothing in her but what became a true Christian and Catholic ; and that the King, considering the distress of his good city of Orleans, might accept her services without sin.

Orders were forthwith given for her state and equipment. She received a suit of knight's armour, but refused any other sword but one marked with five crosses, and lying, as she said, amidst other arms in the church-vault of St. Catherine at Fierbois.*

* The village of Fierbois still remains, and may be seen from the highroad between Paris and Bayonne ; but the present church of St. Catherine dates no higher than the reign of Francis I.—Guide Pittoresque de France, vol. i., Dépt. Indre et Loire, p. 15.

A messenger was sent accordingly, and the sword—an old neglected weapon—was found in the very spot she had described. Immediately the rumour spread abroad—so ready were now the people to believe in her supernatural powers—that she had never been at Fierbois, and that a Divine inspiration had revealed to her the instrument of coming victory. A banner for herself to bear had been made under her direction, or rather as she declared under the direction of her “Voices:” it was white, bestrewn with the *fleurs-de-lis* of France, and bearing the figure of the Saviour in his glory, with the inscription JHESUS MARIA. A brave and tried knight, Jean, Sire d’Aulon, was appointed her esquire; and a good old friar, Father Pasquerel, her confessor; she had two heralds and two pages. Nearly all these persons afterwards appeared as witnesses in the second trial.

Amidst all these proofs and preparations two months had glided away, and it was past mid-April when the Maid appeared before the troops assembling at Blois. She made her entry on horseback, and in complete armour, but her head uncovered; and neither her tall and graceful figure, nor the skill with which she rode her palfrey and poised her lance, remained unnoticed. Her fame had gone forth before her, inspiriting the soldiers with the confidence of Divine support, and consoling them under their repeated reverses. Numbers who had cast aside their arms in despair, buckled them on *for the cause of France*, and in the name of the

Maid. Nearly six thousand men were thus assembled. Charles himself had again withdrawn from the cares and toils of royalty to his favourite haunt of Chinon, but in his place his most valiant captains, the Mareschal de Boussac, the Admiral de Culant, La Hire, the Sires de Retz and De Loré, were ready for the field. It had not been clearly defined at Court whether Joan was only to cheer and animate, or to command and direct the troops; but the rising enthusiasm of the common men at once awarded to her an ascendancy which the chiefs could not withstand. She began with reforming the morals of the camp, expelled from it all women of ill fame, and called upon the men to prepare for battle by confession and prayer. Night and morning Father Pasquerel, bearing aloft her holy banner, and followed by herself and by all the priests of Blois, walked in procession through the town, chanting hymns, and calling sinners to repentance. Many, very many, obeyed the unexpected summons. Even La Hire, a rough soldier, bred up in camps from his childhood, and seldom speaking without an imprecation, yielded to her influence, and went grumbling and swearing to Mass!

From Blois the Maid, herself untaught in writing and reading, dictated a letter to the English captains before Orleans, announcing her mission, and commanding them under pain of vengeance from heaven to yield to King Charles all the good cities which they held in his realm of France. She afterwards complained at her trial that this letter had not been

written according to her dictation, and that, while she had said "Restore to the King," her scribes had made her say "Restore to the Maid." All her letters (one of which, to the Duke of Burgundy, was discovered not many years since amongst the archives of Lille) were headed with the words JHESUS MARIA, and with the sign of the cross. So far from paying any regard to this summons, the English chiefs threatened to burn alive the herald who brought it, as coming from a sorceress and ally of Satan. A message from Dunois, however, that he would use reprisals on an English herald, restrained them. But, notwithstanding their lofty tone and affected scorn, a secret feeling of doubt and dismay began to pervade the minds of their soldiery, and even their own. The fame of the marvellous Maid, of the coming deliverer of Orleans, had already reached them, magnified as usual by distance, by uncertainty, and by popular tales of miracles. If she were indeed, as she pretended, commissioned from on high, how dreadful would be the fate of all who ventured to withstand her! But if even their own assertion were well-founded, if indeed she wrought by spells and sorcery, even then it seemed no very cheering prospect to begin a contest against the powers of darkness!

The French chiefs at Blois had for some time been collecting two convoys of provisions, and their main object was to throw them into Orleans, now reduced to the utmost need; but this seemed no *easy enterprise* in the face of the English army,

flushed with recent victories, and far superior in numbers to their own. Joan, by right of her prophetic mission, insisted that the convoy should proceed along the northern bank of the Loire, through the district of Beauce, while her colleagues proposed the southern bank and the province of Sologne, knowing that the bastilles of the English were much weaker and worse guarded on that side. Unable to overcome her opposition, and wholly distrusting her talents for command when closely viewed, they availed themselves of her ignorance of the country, and, while passing the river at Blois, persuaded her that they were still proceeding along the northern shore. After two days' march, ascending the last ridge that shut out the view of the beleaguered city, Joan was astonished to find the Loire flowing between her and the walls, and broke forth into angry reproaches. But these soon yielded to the necessity of action. She held a conference with Dunois, who had come with boats some way down the Loire to receive the convoy. The night was setting in, and a storm was raging on high, with the wind directly against them; all the chiefs counselled delay, but the Maid insisted that the supplies should be forthwith put on board, promising that the wind should change; it really did change, and became favourable after the embarkation, and thus the convoy was enabled to reach Orleans in safety, while the English generals kept themselves close to their redoubts, withheld partly by the pelt-ing of the storm and the uncertainty of a night

attack, partly by a sally which the citizens made as a diversion on the side of Beauce, and partly by the wish that their soldiers should, before they fought, have an opportunity of seeing Joan more nearly, and recovering from the panic which distant rumour had inspired.

Having thus succeeded with regard to the first convoy, the French captains had resolved to wend back to Blois and escort the second, without themselves entering the city. This resolution had been kept secret from Joan, and she showed herself much displeased, but at length agreed to it, provided Father Pasquerel and the other priests from Blois stayed with the army to maintain its morals. She likewise obtained a promise that the next convoy should proceed, according to her injunctions, through Beauce, instead of Sologne. For herself she undertook, at the earnest entreaty of Dunois and the citizens, to throw herself into the beleaguered city and partake its fortunes. She accordingly made her entry late that same night, the 29th of April, accompanied by the brave La Hire and two hundred lances, and having embarked close under the English bastille of St. Jean le Blanc without any molestation from the awe-struck garrison. High beat the hearts of the poor besieged with joy and wonder at the midnight appearance of their promised deliverer, or rather, as they well-nigh deemed, their guardian angel, heralded by the rolling thunders, with the lightning to guide her on her way, unharmed by a victorious enemy, and bringing long-forgotten plenty

in her train! All pressed around her with loud acclamations, eager to touch for a moment her armour, her holy standard, or the white charger which she rode, and believed that they drew a blessing from that touch!

Late as was the hour, the Maid of Orleans (so we may already term her) repaired first to the cathedral, where the solemn service of "Te Deum" was chanted by torchlight. She then betook herself to her intended dwelling, which she had chosen on careful inquiry, according to her constant practice, as belonging to a lady amongst the most esteemed and unblemished of the place. The very house is still shown: it is now No. 35, in the Rue du Tabourg, and, though the inner apartments have been altered, the street-front is believed by antiquaries to be the same as in the days of Joan.* A splendid entertainment had been prepared for her, but she refused to partake of it, and only dipping a piece of bread into some wine and water, laid herself down to rest.

The impression made upon the people of Orleans by the first appearance of the Maid was confirmed and strengthened by her conduct on the following days. Her beauty of person, her gentleness of manner, and her purity of life—her prayers, so long and so devout—her custom of beginning every sentence with the words "In the name of God," after the fashion of the heralds—her resolute will and un-

* Trollope's 'Western France,' vol. i. pp. 80-83. He quotes a 'History of Orleans,' by E. F. V. Romagnesi.

daunted courage in all that related to her mission, compared with her simplicity and humility upon any other subject—her zeal to reform as well as to rescue the citizens—all this together would be striking even in our own times, and seemed miraculous in theirs. Of speedily raising the siege she spoke without doubt or hesitation: her only anxiety appeared to be to raise it, if she might, without bloodshed. She directed an archer to shoot, attached to his arrow, another letter of warning into the English lines, and herself, advancing along the bridge unto the broken arch, opposite the enemy's fort of Tournelles, exhorted them in a loud voice to depart, or they should feel disaster and shame. Sir William Gladsdale whom all the French writers call Glacidas, still commanded in this quarter. He and his soldiers only answered the Maid with scoffs and ribaldry, bidding her go home and keep her cows. She was moved to tears at their insulting words. But it soon appeared that their derision was affected, and their apprehension real. When on the fourth day the new convoy came in sight by way of Beauce—when the Maid and La Hire sallied forth with their troops to meet and to escort it—not one note of defiance was heard, not one man was seen to proceed from the English bastilles—the long line of waggons, flocks, and herds passed between them unmolested—and the spirit of the victors seemed already transferred to the vanquished.

Thus far the success of the Maid had been gained by the terrors of her name alone; but the moment

of conflict was now close at hand. That same afternoon a part of the garrison and townspeople, flushed with their returning good fortune, made a sally in another quarter against the English bastille of St. Loup. Joan, after bringing in the convoy, had retired home to rest; and the chiefs, distrustful of her mission, and disliking her interposition, sent her no tidings of the fight. But she was summoned by a friendly, or, as she believed, a celestial voice. We will give the story in the words of M. de Barante, as compiled from the depositions of D'Aulon, her esquire, and of Father Pasquerel, her chaplain:—

“The day had been a weary one; Joan threw herself on her bed and tried to sleep, but she was disturbed in mind. All of a sudden she called out to the Sire d'Aulon, her esquire, ‘My council tells me to march against the English, but I do not know whether it should be against their bastilles or against this Fascot (Fastolf). You must arm me.’ The Sire d'Aulon began accordingly to put on her armour. During this time she heard a great noise in the street, the cry being that the enemy were at that very moment inflicting great hurt upon the French. ‘My God,’ she exclaimed, ‘the blood of our people is flowing! Why was not I wakened sooner? Oh, that was ill done!—My arms! my arms! my horse!’—Leaving behind her esquire, who had not yet clad himself in armour, she hastened down stairs: and she found her page loitering before the door. ‘You wicked boy,’ she cried, ‘why did not you come to tell me that the blood of France is being shed? Quick, quick! My horse!’ Her horse was brought; she desired that her banner which she had left in the house might be reached out to her from the window, and

without further delay she set forth, hastening towards the Porte Bourgogne, from whence the din of battle seemed to come. When she had nearly reached it she beheld, carried by her, one of the townsmen grievously wounded. 'Alas,' said she, 'never have I seen the blood of Frenchmen flow, without my hair standing on end!'"

Thus darting full speed through the streets, until she reached the scene of action, Joan plunged headlong into the thickest of the fight. Far from being daunted by the danger when closely viewed, she seemed inspirited, nay, almost inspired, by its presence, as one conscious of support from on high. Waving her white banner aloft, and calling aloud to those around her, she urged her countrymen to courage like her own: she had found them beaten back and retreating; she at once led them on to a second onset. For three hours the battle raged fiercely and doubtfully at the foot of St. Loup; but Talbot, who was hastening to the rescue, was kept at bay by the Mareschal de Boussac and a body of troops, while those headed by Joan at length succeeded in storming the bastille. Scarce any prisoners were made: almost every Englishman found within the walls was put to the sword, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Maid; only some few, having found priests' garments within St. Loup's church, put them on in this extremity, and these men her piety succeeded in preserving.

Next morning, the 5th of May, was the festival of the Ascension, and as a festival was it kept at Orleans; no new attack made upon the English, and

the whole day devoted to public prayers and thanksgiving. In these Joan, as usual, was foremost ; she earnestly exhorted the soldiers to repentance, and desired that none should presume to join her banner without having been first to confession. Her bidding seemed to them as a call from heaven ; and for the first time, perhaps, their untutored lips were heard to pour forth prayers, true and earnest in feeling, though not always duly reverent in expression. One such of the brave La Hire's is recorded ; it was uttered just before going into battle :—" O God, I pray thee that thou wouldest do this day for La Hire as much as thou wouldest that La Hire should do for thee, if he was God, and thou wast La Hire !" " And," adds the honest chronicler from whom we are translating, " he deemed that he was praying right well and devoutly !"

That afternoon the chiefs held a council of war, to which they did not ask the presence of Joan ; another proof how little they confided in her mission. They determined to proceed next to attack the English bastilles on the southern shore, as these were much the least strong, and as it was most important to free the communication between the city and the friendly province of Berri. Joan, when informed of those views, urged again that the attack should be on her favourite side of Beauce, but at length acquiesced in the decision of the council.

Next morning, accordingly, the 6th of May, Joan took her station before daybreak, with La Hire

and other chiefs, in a small islet, near the side of Sologne; from thence again they passed to the shore in boats drawing their horses after them by the bridles. Reinforcements followed as fast as the boats could carry them; but, without awaiting them, Joan began the onset against the Bastille des Augustins. The English made a resolute resistance: to strengthen themselves they withdrew their troops from another of their bastilles, St. Jean le Blanc; and the two garrisons, thus combining, put the French to flight. Joan was borne along by the runaways, but ere long turned round upon the enemy; and at the aspect of this sorceress, as they believed her, close upon them, waving aloft her banner (marked, no doubt, with magical spells), they on their part receded, and sought shelter behind their bulwarks. The French reinforcements were meanwhile coming up, and in another assault the Bastille des Augustins was taken, the garrison put to the sword, and the building set in flames. A body of French troops took up their position for the whole night upon the northern shore; but the Maid was induced to return into the city, slightly wounded in the foot by a caltrop, and having fasted (for it was Friday) during the whole toilsome day.

By the successes of that day only a single fort on the opposite shore, the Bastille des Tournelles, remained in English hands. But it was the strongest of all—on one side confronting the broken bridge with its massy and towering wall—on the land side *intrenched* by a formidable bulwark—and a deep

ditch before it, filled with water from the Loire. More than all, it was held by the brave Gladsdale and his best battalions. A spirit of prudence and of misgiving as to the continued success of the Maid became predominant among the French captains. They resolved to rest contented with the freedom of communication now secured with their own provinces, and to postpone any farther attacks until they should receive farther reinforcements. But to this resolution it was found impossible to obtain the assent of Joan. "You have been to your council," she said, "and I have been to mine. Be assured that the council of Messire will hold good, and that the council of men will perish." What the chiefs dreaded more than her celestial council, she had with her the hearts both of soldiery and people. Entreaties and arguments to prove the superior advantage of doing nothing were urged on her in vain. They did not leave untried even the slight temptation of a shad-fish for her dinner! The story is told as follows, in a chronicle of the time:—

"Whilst the Maid was in thought whether she should go forward, it happened that a shad-fish was brought in to her host Jacques Boucher, who then said to her, 'Joan, let us eat this shad-fish to dinner before you set out.' 'In the name of God,' said she, 'it shall not be eaten till supper, by which time we will return by way of the bridge and bring back with us as prisoner a *Goddam*, who shall eat his share of it!'" *

* *Memoirs concerning the Maid* (Collection, vol. viii. p. 173).

This nickname of *Goddam*—which in more angry times than the present we have often heard muttered behind our countrymen in the streets of Paris—was, we had always fancied, of very modern origin. Till now we could not trace it higher than Beaumarchais, in his ‘*Mariage de Figaro*.’ We now find, however, that all future anti-Anglicans may plead for it, if they please, the venerable antiquity of four centuries, and the high precedent of Joan of Arc.

Not trusting wholly to persuasion,—or to the shad-fish,—the Sire de Gaucourt, governor of the city, with some soldiers, stationed himself before the Porte Bourgogne, through which Joan would have to pass, and resolutely refused to unbar it. “You are an ill man,” cried the Maid; “but whether you will or not, the men-at-arms shall come and shall conquer, as they have conquered before.” The people, and even the soldiers themselves, stirred by her vehemence, rushed upon the Sire de Gaucourt, threatening to tear him in pieces, and he was constrained to yield. Joan accordingly went forth, followed by an eager multitude of townsmen and soldiers, and passed the Loire in boats to attack the Tournelles by their bulwark, on the opposite side. Thus finding the attack inevitable, the French leaders, Dunois, La Hire, Gaucourt himself, and a host of others, determined to bear their part in it, and embarked like Joan for the opposite shore; and all of them by their conduct in the *engagement* most fully proved that their former

reluctance to engage had not flowed from want of valour.

From the northern shore the English chiefs, Suffolk, Talbot, and Fastolf, had beheld these preparations, but found their own troops panic-stricken at "the sorceress." They could not prevail upon them either to leave their bulwarks and pass the river for the assistance of their comrades, or to attack the city while deprived of its best defenders. Gladsdale was therefore left to his own resources. Besides the strength of his fortifications, his five hundred men of garrison—knights and esquires—were the very flower of the English army; and thus, however fierce and brave the attack, he was able to stand firm against it. He poured upon the French a close and well-sustained discharge, both from bows and fire-arms; and whenever they attempted to scale the rampart, he overthrew their ladders with hatchets, pikes, and mallets. The assault had begun at ten in the morning, and the Maid was as usual in the foremost ranks, waving her standard, and calling aloud to the soldiers. About noon, seeing their ardour slacken, she snatched up a ladder to plant against the walls, and began ascending. At that moment an arrow passed through her corslet, and deeply pierced her between the neck and shoulder; she fell back into the fosse, and the English were already pressing down to make her prisoner: but she was rescued by her countrymen, and borne away from the scene of action. When laid upon the ground and disarmed,

the anguish of her wound drew from her ~~so~~ tears; but she had, as she declares, a vision of ~~h~~ two Saints, and from that moment felt consoled. With her own hands she pulled out the arrow; she desired the wound to be quickly dressed; and after some moments passed in silent prayer, hastened back to head the troops. They had suspended the conflict in her absence, and had been disheartened by her wound; but it had not at all diminished their ideas of her supernatural powers; on the contrary, they immediately discovered that she had more than once foretold it, and that the untoward event only proved her skill in prophecy. They now, invigorated by their rest, and still more by her return, rushed back with fresh ardour to a second onset, while the English were struck with surprise at the sudden appearance in arms of one whom they had so lately beheld hurled down, and, as they thought, half dead in the ditch. Several of them were even so far bewildered by their own terrors as to see in the air the forms of the Archangel Michael, and of Aignan, the patron saint of Orleans, mounted on white chargers, and fighting on the side of the French. The cooler heads among the English were no less dismayed at the news that another body of the townspeople had advanced to the broken arch, at the opposite end of the fort; that they were keeping up a murderous fire, and throwing over huge beams of wood for their passage. Sir William Gladsdale, still undaunted, resolved to withdraw from the outer bulwarks, and concentrate his force

against both attacks within the "Tournelles," or towers themselves. He was then full in sight of Joan. "Surrender!" she cried out to him; "surrender to the King of Heaven! Ah, Glacidas, your words have foully wronged me; but I have great pity on your soul, and on the souls of your men!" Heedless of this summons, the English chief was pursuing his way along the drawbridge; just then a cannon-ball from the French batteries alighting upon it broke it asunder, and Gladsdale with his best knights perished in the stream. The assailants now pressed into the bastille without further resistance: of the garrison, three hundred were already slain, and nearly two hundred remained to be prisoners of war.

At the close of this well-fought day, the Maid, according to her prediction in the morning, came back to Orleans by the bridge. It need scarcely be told how triumphantly she was received: all night rejoicing peals rung from the church-bells; the service of "Te Deum" was chanted in the cathedral; and the soldiers returning from the fight were detained at every step by the eager curiosity or the exulting acclamations of their brother-townsmen. Far different was the feeling in the English lines. That night the Earl of Suffolk summoned Fastolf, Talbot, and the other principal officers to council. By the reinforcements of the French, and by their own recent losses, they had now become inferior in numbers; they could read dejection impressed on each pale countenance around them;

they knew that no hope was left them of taking the city, and that by remaining before it they should only have to undergo repeated, and probably, late experience showed, disastrous attacks in their own bastilles. With heavy hearts they resolved to raise the siege. Thus, the next morning—Sunday the 8th of May—their great forts of London and St. Lawrence, and all their other lodgments and ramparts—the fruit of so many toilsome months—were beheld in flames; while the English troops, drawn up in battle array, advanced towards the city walls and braved the enemy to combat on an open field. Finding their challenge declined, they began their retreat towards Mehun-sur-Loire in good order, but for want of transport, leaving behind their sick and their wounded, and their baggage. The garrison and townspeople were eager to fight or to follow them; but Joan would not allow the day of rest to be thus profaned. “In the name of God,” she cried, “let them depart! and let us go and give thanks to God.” So saying she led the way to High Mass.

Thus had the heroine achieved the first part of her promise—the raising of the siege of Orleans. She had raised it in only seven days from her arrival; and of these seven days, no less than three—Sunday the 1st—the Fête de la Cathédrale on the 3rd—and Ascension-Day the 5th (besides Sunday the 8th)—had been by her directions devoted to public prayer. Even to the present times, the last anniversary—the day of their deliverance—is

still held sacred at Orleans. Still on each successive 8th of May do the magistrates walk in solemn procession round the ancient limits of the city; the service of "Te Deum" again resounds from the cathedral; and a discourse is delivered from the pulpit in honour of the Maid.*

The second part of Joan's promise—to crown the King at Rheims—still remained. Neither wearied by her toils, nor yet elated by her triumphs, she was again within a few days before Charles at his Court at Tours—the same untaught and simple shepherdess—urging him to confide in her guidance, and enable her to complete her mission. Her very words have been recorded in a chronicle, written probably the same year:—

"When Joan the Maid was before the King, she kneeled down and clasped him by the feet, saying, 'Gentle Dauphin, come and receive your noble crown at Rheims; I am greatly pressed that you should go there; do not doubt that you will there be worthily crowned as you ought.' It happened then that the King in his own thoughts, and also three or four of the chief men and captains around him, deemed it would be right, if not displeasing to the said Joan, to inquire what her Voices had said to her. She saw their thoughts, and said, 'In the name of God I know right well what you think and desire to ask me of the Voice which I heard speak touching your being crowned, and I will tell you truly. I had set myself to prayer as I am wont to do, and I was complaining

* *Supplément aux Mémoires* (Collection, vol. viii. p. 317). It is added, "This ceremonial has never been omitted except during the most stormy years of the Revolution."

because I was not believed in what I had said ; and ~~then~~ I heard the Voice declare, " Daughter, go forward ; I ~~will~~ be thy helper, go ! " * and when that Voice comes to ~~me~~, I feel so joyful as is wondrous to tell.' And while ~~speaking~~ these words she raised her eyes towards heaven ~~with~~ every sign of gladness and exultation." †

There is another original document describing the Maid's appearance at this time ; a letter from ~~an~~ a young officer, Guy, Sire de Laval, to his mother and grandmother at home. It begins in an old ~~and~~ fashioned form : " My very redoubtable ladies and ~~mothers~~ ; " ‡ and, after some details of his journey, ~~proceeds~~ proceeds to the following effect :—

" On the Sunday, then, I set out with the King to go to Selles in Berry, four leagues from St. Agnan ; and the King caused the Maid, who before this was at Selles, to come forth and meet him. . . . The aforesaid Maid appeared fully armed on all points save only her head, and held her lance in her hand, and she gave a hearty welcome to my brother and me. After we had dismounted at Selles I went to her dwelling to see her, upon which she ordered wine to be brought in, and told me that right soon she would have me to drink wine at Paris. Both in seeing and in hearing her, she seems altogether a being from heaven. This same Monday, about the time of vespers, she set out again from Selles to go to Romorantin, three leagues forward on the enemy's side, having with her the Mareschal de Boussac and much folk, both men in arms and of the commonalty. There I saw her on horseback,

* " Fille, va, va ; je seray à ton aide ; va ! "

† Memoirs concerning the Maid (Collection, vol. viii. p. 180).

‡ " Mes très redoutées dames et mères. "

all in *blank* armour save her head, with a small axe in her hand, and mounted on a great black charger, who, at the door of her dwelling, was prancing and rearing, and would not allow her to mount, upon which she said, 'Lead me to the cross which stands before the church on the road.' And after this she mounted without fur-durance, for the horse grew as quiet as though he had been bound. And then she turned towards the main-door, which was nigh, and said in a clear woman's voice, 'Ye priests and churchmen, do ye make procession and pray to God.' She then pursued her journey, saying, 'Go forward, go forward!' Her banner was folded up by a well-favoured page; her small axe was in her hand, and a brother of hers who has joined her days since was in her company, also clad in *blank* armour." *

Notwithstanding the splendid success of the young Maid before Orleans, the King did not as yet yield to her entreaties, nor undertake the expedition to Paris. It seemed necessary, in the first place, to secure the other posts which the English still held on the Loire. In this object the Maid took a vigorous and intrepid share. Setting off from Paris, the chiefs first laid siege to Jargeau, into which the Earl of Suffolk had retired with several hundred men. For some days the artillery played on both sides; a breach was effected in the walls; and on the 12th of June the French trumpets sounded the signal to assault. Joan was as usual at the foremost, with her holy banner dis-

* Collection des *Mémoires*, vol. viii. p. 225.

played. She had herself planted a ladder, and ^{was} ascending the walls, when a huge stone, ^{rolled} down from the summit, struck her on the helmet, ^{etc.} and hurled her headlong into the fosse. Immediately rising again, not unhurt but still undaunted, she continued to animate her countrymen:—"Forward! forward! my friends! the Lord has delivered them into our hands!" The storm was renewed with fresh ardour and complete success; the town was taken, and nearly the whole garrison put to the sword; many, notwithstanding Joan's humane endeavours, being slain in cold blood, whenever there was any dispute for ransom. The fate of the Earl of Suffolk is a striking incident and illustration of the age of chivalry. When closely pursued by one of the French officers, he turned round and asked him if he were of gentle birth? "I am," replied the officer, whose name was Guillaume Regnault, an esquire of Auvergne. "And are you a knight?" "I am not." "Then I will make you one," said Suffolk; and having first struck Regnault with his sword, and thus dubbed him as his superior, he next surrendered the same sword to him as his captive.

The fate of Jargeau deterred the garrisons of Beaugency and Mehun from resistance; and Talbot, who had now succeeded to the chief command, gathering into one body the remaining English troops, began in all haste his retreat towards the Seine. In his way he was met by Fastolf with a reinforcement of four thousand men. The French

chiefs at the same time received a like accession of force under the Lord Constable of France, Arthur de Richemont. He had become estranged from the King by the cabals of La Trimouille, the reigning minion at Court, and Charles had written to forbid his coming; nevertheless he still drew near; and Joan, in a spirit of headlong loyalty, proposed to go forth and give him battle. No one seemed to relish this proposal; on the contrary, it excited general complaints. Several officers muttered that they were friends of the Constable, and in case of need should prefer him to all the maids in the kingdom. At length Joan herself was made to comprehend the importance of shunning civil discord, and combining against the common enemy; she agreed to welcome the Constable on his taking an oath of loyalty, and to use her intercession with the King on his behalf. The combined forces then pushed forward, eager to overtake the English army in its retreat. On the 18th of June they came up with it near the village of Patay. So altered were the English within the last few weeks—so awestruck at the idea of supernatural power being wielded against them—that they scarcely stood firm a moment. The battle was decided almost as soon as begun. Even the brave Fastolf betook himself to flight at the first fire, in punishment for which the Order of the Garter was afterwards taken from him. Talbot disdained to show his back to an enemy; he dismounted to fight on foot amongst the foremost, but, being left almost alone, he was speedily made pri-

soner, together with Lord Scales ; while upwards of two thousand men were killed in the pursuit.

The victory at Patay gave fresh weight to Joan's entreaties that the King would set forth to be crowned at Rheims. Such an expedition was still overcast by doubts and perils. Rheims itself, and every other city on the way, was in the hands of enemies ; and a superior force, either of English from the left, or of Burgundians from the right, might assail the advancing army. To add to these difficulties, Charles himself, at that period of his life, was far from disposed to personal exertion ; nevertheless, he could not withstand the solicitations of the "inspired" Maid, and the wish of the victorious troops. Collecting ten or twelve thousand men at Gien, he marched from the valley of the Loire, accompanied by Joan herself, by his bravest captains, and by his wisest counsellors. They first appeared before the city of Auxerre, which shut its gates, but consented, on a payment of money, to furnish a supply of provisions. Their next point was Troyes ; but here they found the city held by five or six hundred Burgundian soldiers, and refusing all terms of treaty. Nothing remained but a siege, and for this the King wanted both time and means. He had with him neither mining tools nor artillery, nor stores of provisions, and the soldiers subsisted only by plucking the ears of corn and the half-ripened beans from the fields. Several days had passed, and no progress been made. At length a council was held, when the Chancellor and nearly

all the other chief men pressed for a retreat to the Loire. While they were still deliberating, a knock was heard at the door, and the Maid of Orleans came in; she first asked the King whether she should be believed in what she was about to say. He coldly answered that she should, provided she said things that were reasonable and profitable. "The city is yours," she then exclaimed, "if you will but remain before it two days longer!" So confident seemed her present prediction—such good results had followed the past,—that the council agreed to make a further trial, and postpone their intended retreat. Without delay, and eager to make good her words, Joan sprang on horseback, and directed all the men-at-arms she met—gentle or simple alike—to exert themselves in heaping together faggots and other wood-work, and preparing what in the military language of that day is called *taudis et approches*. The townsmen of Troyes, assembling on their ramparts, gazed on her while thus employed, and bethought them of her mighty deeds at Orleans, already magnified into the miraculous by popular report. The more credulous of these gazers even declared that they could see a swarm of white butterflies hovering above her standard. The more loyal began to recollect that they were Frenchmen, not Burgundians—that Charles was their true liege lord—that they should be rebels to resist him. Under the influence of these various feelings, which the garrison could not venture to resist, they sent out to offer some terms

of capitulation; the King, as may be supposed, made no objection to any; and next day he was joyfully received within the gates.

The newly-roused loyalty of Troyes spread rapidly, like every popular impulse, to Châlons and to Rheims, where the inhabitants, rising, as if in concert, expelled the Burgundian garrisons, and proclaimed the rightful King. On the 16th of July, Charles, without having encountered a single enemy, made a triumphal entry into the city of Rheims, amidst loud cries of "NOEL!" which was then the usual acclamation of joy in France at the King's arrival. Next day that stately cathedral—which even yet proudly towers above the ruins of time or of revolutions—saw his brow encircled with the crown of his forefathers, and anointed from the Sainte Ampoule, the cruse of holy oil, which according to the Romish legend had been sent by a dove from Heaven to the Royal convert, Clovis. The people looked on with wonder and with awe. Thus had really come to pass the fantastic visions that floated before the eyes of the poor shepherd-girl of Domremy! Thus did she perform her twofold promise to the King within three months from the day when she first appeared in arms at Blois! During the coronation of her sovereign—so long the aim of her thoughts and prayers, and reserved to be at length achieved by her own prowess—the Maid stood before the high altar by the side of the King, with her banner unfurled in her hand. "Why was your banner thus honoured beyond all other ban-

ners?" she was asked at her trial. "It had shared the danger," she answered; "it had a right to share the glory."

The holy rites having been performed, the Maid knelt down before the newly-crowned monarch, her eyes streaming with tears. "Gentle King," she said, "now is fulfilled the pleasure of God, who willed that you should come to Rheims and be anointed, showing that you are the true King, and he to whom the kingdom should belong." She now regarded her mission as accomplished, and her inspiration as fled. "I wish," she said, "that the gentle King would allow me to return towards my father and mother, keep my flocks and herds as before, and do all things as I was wont to do."

"End with many tears implored!
'Tis the sound of home restored!
And as mounts the angel show,
Gliding with them she would go,
But, again to stoop below,
And returned to green Lorraine,
Be a shepherd child again!"*

This feeling in the mind of Joan was no doubt strengthened by the unexpected sight of Laxart and Jacques d'Arc—her uncle and her father—who had come to Rheims to take part in her triumph, and had mingled in the throng of spectators.

It is worthy of note that among the ancient records at Rheims is, or was, the account for the entertainment of Jacques d'Arc, which was defrayed

* Joan of Arc, Sterling's Poems, p. 236.

by the King. It appears that he lodged at an inn called the Striped Ass or Zebra (*l'Ane Rayé*), kept by the widow Alix Moriau, and that the bill amounted to twenty-four *livres Parisis*.^{*} That house still remains, and still is used as an inn, but the name has been changed to *La Maison Rouge*.[†] Such little details give a striking air of reality to the romantic story.

The Maid's request for leave to forsake the wars and return to her village-home was by no means favourably received. The King and his captains, even whilst themselves distrusting her heavenly mission or supernatural powers, had seen how the belief in them had wrought upon the soldiery and the people. They foresaw that in losing her they should lose their best ally. They spared no exertions, no entreaties, to make her forego her thoughts of home, and continue with the army—and they finally prevailed. From this time forward it has been observed that Joan still displayed the same courage in battle, and the same constancy in pain; that she seemed animated with the same confidence in the good cause of France, but that she no longer seemed to feel the same persuasion that she was acting at the command and under the guidance of heaven.[‡]

Nor can the King be accused at this period of any want of gratitude to his female champion. He

^{*} *Supplément aux Mémoires* (Collection, vol. viii. p. 276).

[†] Costello's 'Pilgrimage to Auvergne, 1841,' vol. i. p. 137.

[‡] *Sismondi*, vol. xiii. p. 145.

was anxious to attain wisdom, her father refused all rewards for herself or her country, and only asked the favour that her country should hereafter be free from any kind of impost. This privilege, so honourable both to the giver and receiver, was granted by the King in an ordinance dated July 31, 1419, and confirmed by letters in 1459. It continued in force for more than three centuries. The registers of taxes for the *Élection* of Chaumont used, until the Revolution, to bear opposite the name of every village the sum to be received from it; but when they came to the article DOMREMY, they always added *NÉANT. À CAUSE DE LA PUCELLE*.

The good example set by Troyes and Rheims in opening their gates to the King was ere long followed by Laon, Soissons, Compiègne, Beauvais, and other places of importance. Step by step the King was drawing nearer to the walls of Paris, while the English, although they had lately received some reinforcements from home, were not able to keep the field against him. During this march, however, an ill omen was noticed—the sword of the Maid broke asunder—how and wherefore we will leave to M. de Barante to tell:—

“Victory had made the French arrogant and thoughtless, so that they resigned themselves to every kind of licentiousness; nothing could restrain them. In this the Maid was not hearkened to. Her wrath was so far kindled that one day as she met some men at arms, who were making merry with a woman of loose life, she began

to beat them with the flat of her sword so hard that the weapon broke. This was the sword found in the church of Fierbois, and which had just achieved such noble deeds. The loss of it was a grief to everybody, and even to the King. He said to Joan, 'You ought to have taken a good stout stick and struck the men with that, instead of risking this sword, which has come to you by help from heaven as you say.'

The King and his army continued advancing towards Paris ; and at length, from the heights of St Denis, the domes and spires of his ancient capital rose in sight before him. It seemed an auspicious time for his coming, the Duke of Bedford having been summoned away to quell some disturbances in Normandy. An assault was given accordingly in the month of September, 1429, and on the same ground where the Rue Traversière now stands. The Maid had been eager for it, and made a prediction or promise to the soldiers that in the ensuing night they should sleep within the city walls. But the King's military ardour had already cooled ; and he could not be prevailed upon to approach the scene of action nearer than St. Denis. Of his officers, many were downcast at his absence, and some jealous of the high renown which Joan had gained. Thus her efforts were but feebly seconded on this occasion. She easily led the troops across the first ditch of the city ; but she found the second broad, deep, and full of water ; and while she was sounding it to and fro with her lance, to discover where it might be shallowest, she was grievously wounded by an arrow

from the walls, and her standard-bearer was killed by her side. Still, however, she would not give the signal of retreat; and from the ground, where she lay stretched and helpless on the reverse of the first fosse, she continued to urge on the soldiers, and to call for faggots and fascines, resisting all entreaties to withdraw until the evening, when the Duke of Alençon, having come up and shown her how ill the attack had prospered, she allowed herself to be borne away.

Dispirited at this failure, and viewing it as an admonition from Heaven, the Maid consecrated her armour to God before the tomb of St. Denis, and determined to retire from the wars. Renewed entreaties on the part of the chiefs, judiciously mingled with praises of her past exertions, again prevailed over her own judgment, and she consented to follow the King's fortunes. Charles himself, already sighing for the peaceful shades of Chinon, and for his customary life of pleasure, eagerly seized the late repulse as a pretext for retreat. He led back the troops by rapid marches across the Loire, and dispersed them in winter-quarters, at the very time when the absence of the Duke of Bedford seemed to invite him to fresh exertions, when Amiens, Abbeville, St. Quentin, and other important towns in the north, were only awaiting his approach to throw open their gates to him. His conduct on this occasion has in general been glossed over by French historians from respect to his high deeds in after life, but M. de Sismondi has treated it with just

severity. "It is probable," says he, "that, but for the King's supineness, he might on the first assault have made himself master of his capital . . . and his sudden retreat to Chinon everywhere depressed and deadened the enthusiasm of his people. The unwarlike citizens who, throughout the towns of Champagne, of Picardy, and of the Isle of France, were now rising or conspiring to throw off the English yoke, well knew that if they failed there would be no mercy for them, and that they would perish by the hangman's hands, yet they boldly exposed themselves in order to replace their King on his throne; and this King, far from imitating their generosity, could not even bring himself to bear the hardships of a camp or the toils of business for more than two months and a half; he would not any longer consent to forego his festivals, his dances, or his other less innocent delights." *

The winter was passed by Joan chiefly at the King's Court in Bourges, or Mehun-sur-Yevre, in the neighbourhood of Bourges. In December the King granted letters-patent of nobility to her family and herself, with the privilege of bearing the Lily of France for their arms.† At the same inclement season she again distinguished herself in assaults upon the citadels of St. Pierre Le Moutier, and La Charité.

But the most singular event of this period was

* Sismondi, vol. xiii. pp. 152-162.

† These letters-patent are printed in M. Petitet's 'Collection,' vol. viii. p. 333.

the appearance at Court of another holy woman, declaring herself, like Joan, to be inspired. Her name was Catherine, and she came from La Rochelle with a mission, she said, not of war but of wealth. For her object was, by preaching to the people, to persuade them to offer their money to the King, and she alleged that she was able to distinguish those who kept their treasures concealed. She too, like the Maid of Orleans, had her visions; often seeing in them, as she stated, a white lady clothed all in gold—the dress being certainly no unfit emblem of the mission! To a King with craving courtiers and an empty exchequer, such a mission could not be otherwise than welcome. But we may remark that Joan from the first entertained a strong distrust—a professional jealousy it might perhaps be called—of her sister-prophetess. She asked to be shown the white lady. Catherine replied that her visions came only in the hours of darkness, and that Joan might be a witness to them by remaining with her at that time. All night, accordingly, the Maid of Orleans watched by her side, in fruitless expectation of the promised sight; but having fallen asleep towards morning, Catherine declared that the white lady had appeared in that very interval. Determined not to be baffled in this manner, Joan lay down to sleep the whole of the next day, that she might be sure to be wakeful at night; and wakeful she was accordingly, always urging Catherine with the question—"Is she coming soon?" and always answered—"Soon, soon." But nothing appeared.

The argument drawn from these facts did not appear altogether conclusive, even in that superstitious age, since Joan was not able, any more than Catherine, to display her visions to others. Several persons stated this objection to Joan herself; but she readily replied that they were not sufficiently righteous and holy to see what she had seen. Nevertheless, to end this controversy, she declared that she had consulted her Saints, Catherine and Margaret, who had told her that there was nothing but folly and falsehood in the woman of La Rochelle. She therefore strongly counselled the King to send the pretended prophetess home "to keep her household and to nurse her children." It does not appear how far either the King or the lady followed this good advice. The further fortunes of Catherine are nowhere to be found recorded.*

At the return of spring, Charles, still preferring pleasure to glory, could not be induced to take the field in person. But, like the captain "who fled full soon," in Mr. Canning's ballad, "he bade the rest keep fighting!" His troops passed the Loire, and marched into the northern provinces, but in diminished numbers, with no prince of the blood or chief of high name to lead them, and aiming apparently at no object of importance.† In some desultory

* The story of Catherine is circumstantially told by De Barante, vol. vi. pp. 69-71.

† "Charles VII., far from taking the command of his army in person, did not even send to it one of the princes of the blood, or one of the great lords of his court—nor would he allow the *Connétable* to go thither. In that army, therefore, the Maid found herself associated only with brutal adventurers, ill provided either with money

skirmishes the Maid displayed her wonted valour, and struck the enemy with the same terror as before. The Duke of Gloucester found it necessary to issue a proclamation to reassure his troops: it is dated May 3, 1430, and is still preserved, denoting in its very title the barbarous Latin of the middle ages:—*Contra capitaneos et soldarios tergiversantes, incantationibus Puellæ terrificatos.*

On leaving Picardy in the preceding year, Charles had confided his newly-acquired fortress of Compiègne to the charge of Guillaume de Flavy, a captain of tried bravery, but, even beyond his compeers in that age, harsh and pitiless.* He was now besieged by the Duke of Burgundy, at the head of a powerful army. Joan, hearing of his danger, courageously resolved to share his fortunes, and threw herself into the place on the 24th of May, accompanied by Xaintrailles, Chabannes, Valperga, and other knights of renown. The very evening of her arrival she headed the garrison in a sally on the side of the bridge across the Oise. She found the Burgundians scattered and unprepared; twice she drove them from their entrenchments, but, seeing their numbers increase every moment, she gave the signal to retreat, herself maintaining the post of honour, the last of the rear-guard. Never had she

or with stores of war, and unwilling to submit to any discipline."—*Sismondi*, vol. xiii. p. 159.

* "Flavy was a brave man in war, but a tyrant, and doing the most horrible tyrannies that are possible, as seizing girls, in spite of every remonstrance, and putting violence upon them, putting men to death without mercy, and breaking them upon a wheel."—*Mémoires de Duclercy*.

shown greater intrepidity: but as she approached the town-gate she found it partly closed, so that but few could press in together; confusion spread amongst her friends, less eager to succour her than to save themselves, and she found herself surrounded by her enemies. Still she made those before her recoil, and might have effected her retreat, when an archer from Picardy, coming up from behind, seized her by her coat of crimson velvet, and drew her from her horse to the ground. She struggled to rise again, and reached the outer fosse: there, however, she was overpowered, and compelled to surrender to Lionel, a bastard of Vendone,* and a soldier in the company of John of Luxemburg. The battlements of Compiègne have long since mouldered away; choked by the fallen fragments, the fosse is once more level with the plain; even the old bridge has been replaced by another higher up the stream—yet, amidst all these manifold changes, the precise spot of the catastrophe—we gazed on it but a few weeks since—is still pointed out by popular tradition to the passing stranger.

The news of Joan's captivity struck the English and their partisans with a joy proportioned to their former terrors. The service of "Te Deum" was celebrated at Paris, by order of the Duke of Bedford, and in token of general thanksgiving. Meanwhile the dejection of the French soldiery was not

* Not Vendome, as most writers have supposed. The place meant *is now* called Wandonne, in the Département du Pas de Calais.—*Quicherat*, 'Procès de Jeanne d'Arc,' vol. i. p. 13.

unmingled with whispered suspicions that their officers—and especially Guillaume de Flavy—had knowingly and willingly exposed her to danger, from envy of her superior renown. For a long time there was no positive proof against Flavy : but at length he was murdered by his own wife, who, when put upon her trial, pleaded and proved that he had resolved to betray Joan of Arc to the enemy ; and this defence, though wholly irrelevant to the question at issue, was in that barbarous age admitted by the judges.*

The captive heroine was first conducted to the quarters of John of Luxemburg, and transferred in succession to the prisons of Beaurevoir, Arras, and Le Crotoy, at the mouth of the Somme. She made two intrepid attempts at escape. Once she had broken a passage through the wall, but was arrested on her way, and still more closely confined. Another time she threw herself headlong from the summit of her prison tower, but was taken up senseless on the ground. She afterwards declared, in her examination, that her “ Voices ” had dissuaded her from this attempt, but had consoled her under its failure.

The English were, however, impatient to hold the prisoner in their own hands ; and, in the month of November, 1430, she was purchased from John of Luxemburg for a sum of ten thousand livres. Her cruel treatment in her new captivity is well described by M. de Barante ;—

“ Joan was taken to Rouen, where were then the young

* *Supplément aux Mémoires* (Collection, vol. viii. p. 287).

King Henry and all the chiefs of the English. She was led into the great tower of the castle, an iron cage was made for her, and her feet were secured by a chain. The English archers who guarded her treated her with gross contumely, and more than once attempted violence upon her. Nor were they merely common soldiers who showed themselves cruel and violent towards her. The Sire de Luxembourg, whose prisoner she had been, happening to pass through Rouen, went to see her in her prison, accompanied by the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Stafford.* 'Joan,' said he, in jest, 'I am come to put you to ransom, but you will have to promise never again to bear arms against us.' 'Ah! *mon Dieu*, you are laughing at me,' said she; 'you have neither the will nor the power to ransom me. I know well that the English will cause me to die, thinking that after my death they will win back the kingdom of France; but even were they a hundred thousand *Goddams* more than they are they shall never have this kingdom.' Incensed at these words, the Earl of Stafford drew his dagger to strike her, but was prevented by the Earl of Warwick."

The forebodings of the unhappy woman were but too true; her doom was indeed already sealed. Had she been put to death as a prisoner of war, the act, however repugnant to every dictate of justice and humanity, would not have been without precedent or palliation, according to the manners of that age. Thus, as we have seen, the English captives at Jargeau had been deliberately put to the sword after their surrender, to avert some disputes as to their ransom. Thus, also, there is still extant a letter

* Not Strafford, as written by M. de Barante.

from an English admiral, Winnington, stating his determination to kill or drown the crews of one hundred merchantmen which he had taken, unless the council should deem it better to preserve their lives.* Nay, Joan herself was charged, although unjustly, with having sanctioned this practice in the case of Franquet, a Burgundian freebooter, who fell into her hands, and was hanged shortly before her own captivity. But the conduct of Joan's enemies has not even the wretched excuse which such past inhumanities might supply. Their object was not only to wreak their vengeance upon the Maid for their former losses, but to discredit her in popular opinion, to brand her (we quote the very words of Bedford) as "a disciple and lymbe of the fiende that used false enchauntments and sorcerie,"† and to lower and taint the cause of Charles VII. by connecting it with such unhallowed means. They therefore renounced any rights of war which they possessed over her as their prisoner, to claim those of sovereignty and jurisdiction as their subject, which she never had been, and resolved to try her before an ecclesiastical tribunal on the charge of witchcraft. They found a fitting tool for their purpose in Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who was wholly devoted to their interest, and who presented a petition for the trial, on the frivolous pretext that she had been made prisoner within his diocese. The University of Paris was so

* Fenn's 'Collection of Letters,' vol. i. p. 213. Dr. Lingard has pointed out this passage in his 'History of England.'

† Rymer's 'Fœdera,' vol. x. p. 408.

far misled by party views as to join in the same request. The Bishop himself was appointed the first judge; the second was Jean Lemaitre, vicar-general of the Inquisition; and the office of public advocate or accuser devolved upon Estivet, a canon of Beauvais. The tribunal thus formed, and directed to hold its sittings at Rouen, was also attended by nearly one hundred doctors of theology, who had not, like the Bishop and vicar-general, votes in the decision, but who gave their counsel and assistance when required, under the title of assessors.

Unjustifiable as this trial appears in its general scope and design, it was further darkened in its progress by many acts of fraud and violence, and an evident predetermination to condemn. A private investigation, similar to those at Poitiers, and with the same result, having been appointed, the Duke of Bedford is said to have concealed himself in a neighbouring apartment, and looked on through a rent in the wall. A priest, named Nicolas l'Oiseleur, was instructed to enter the prison of Joan, to represent himself as her countryman from Lorraine, and as a sufferer in the cause of King Charles; thus, it was hoped, gaining upon her confidence, giving her false counsels, and betraying her, under the seal of confession, into some unguarded disclosures. A burgher of Rouen was sent to Domremy to gather some accounts of her early life; but, as these proved uniformly favourable, they were suppressed at the trial. In like manner, many answers tending to her *vindication* were garbled or omitted in the written

reports. She was allowed neither counsel nor adviser. In short, every artifice was used to entrap, every threat to overawe, an untaught and helpless girl.

It will, we trust, be acknowledged that, in our statement of this trial, we have neither denied nor palliated its evil deeds. But when we find them urged by some French writers, even at the present day, as an eternal blot upon the English name—as a still subsisting cause of national resentment—we may perhaps be allowed to observe, in self-defence, that the worst wrongs of Joan were dealt upon her by the hands of her own countrymen. Her most bitter enemy, the Bishop of Beauvais, was a Frenchman; so was his colleague, the vicar-general of the Inquisition; so were both the malignant Estivet and the perfidious L'Oiseleur—the judges, the accuser, and the spy! Even after this large deduction, there will still remain a heavy responsibility against the English authorities—both civil and religious—against the Duke of Bedford and the Cardinal of Winchester.

On the 21st of February, 1431, Joan was brought for the first time before her judges. She underwent, nearly on successive days, fifteen examinations. The scene was the castle-chapel at Rouen; and she appeared clad, as of yore, in military attire, but loaded with chains. Undepressed, either by her fallen fortunes or by her long and cruel captivity, she displayed in her answers the same courageous spirit with which she had defended Orleans and stormed Jargeau. Nor was it courage only; her plain and

clear good sense often seemed to retrieve her want of education, and to pierce through the subtle wiles and artifices elaborately prepared to ensnare her. Thus, for example, she was asked whether she knew herself to be in the grace of God? Had she answered in the affirmative, then arrogance and presumption would forthwith have been charged upon her; if in the negative, she would have been treated as guilty by her own confession. "It is a great matter," she said, "to reply to such a question." "So great a matter," interposed one of the assessors, touched with pity—his name deserves to be recorded, it was Jean Fabry—"that the prisoner is not bound in law to answer it." "You had better be silent," said the Bishop of Beauvais fiercely to Fabry, and he repeated the question to Joan. "If I am not in the grace of God," she said, "I pray God that it may be vouchsafed to me; if I am, I pray God that I may be preserved in it."

Thus, again, she was asked whether the saints of her visions, Margaret and Catherine, hated the English nation? If the answer was that they did, such partiality would ill beseem the glorified spirits of heaven, and the imputation of it might be punished as blasphemy; but if Joan should reply that they did not, the retort was ready;—"Why then did they send you forth to fight against us?" She answered, "They love whatever God loves, and hate whatever he hates." "Does God, then, hate the English?" pursued the inexorable Bishop of Beauvais. "*Whether God may love or may hate the English I know*

not ; but I know that they shall be driven forth from this realm by the King of France—all but those who shall die in the field.”

The two points on which Joan's enemies and judges (the terms are here synonymous) mainly relied were—first, the “Tree of the Fairies,” near Domremy ; and, secondly, the banner borne by herself in battle. Both of these it was attempted to connect with evil spirits or magical spells. As to the first, Joan replied, clearly and simply, that she had often been round the tree in procession with the other maidens of the village, but had never beheld any of her visions at that spot. With regard to the banner, she declared that she had assumed it in battle on purpose to spare the lance and the sword ; that she wished not to kill any one with her own hand, and that she never had. But she was closely pressed with many other questions :—

“When you first took this banner, did you ask whether it would make you victorious in every battle?” “The Voices,” answered she, “told me to take it without fear, and that God would help me.”

“Which gave the most help—you to the banner, or the banner to you?” “Whether victory came from the banner or from me, it belonged to our Lord alone.”

“Was the hope of victory founded on the banner or on yourself?” “It was founded on God, and on nought besides.”

“If another person had borne it, would the same success have followed?” “I cannot tell : I refer myself to God.”

“Why were you chosen sooner than another?” “It

was the pleasure of God that thus a simple maid should put the foes of the King to flight."

"Were not you wont to say, to encourage the soldiers, that all the standards made in semblance of your own would be fortunate?" "I used to say to them, 'Rush in boldly among the English;' and then I used to rush in myself."

The clearness and precision of her replies on these points stand forth in strange contrast to the vague and contradictory accounts which she gives of her first interview with the King. On this topic she at first refuses to answer altogether, saying that she is forbidden by her Voices. But afterwards she drops mysterious hints of an angel bringing a crown to Charles from heaven; sometimes saying that the King alone had beheld this vision, and sometimes that it had been before many witnesses. In other examinations she declares that she herself was this angel; in others, again, she appears to confound the imaginary crown of the vision with the real one at Rheims.* In short, this was clearly one mainspring of her enthusiasm, or a morbid point in her mind where judgment and memory had been overpowered by imagination.

No proof or presumption, however, to confirm the charges of sorcery could be deduced from her own examinations or from any other. So plain and candid had been the general tenor of her answers, that, it being referred to the assessors whether or not she

* De Barante, vol. vi. p. 121; and Quicherat, '*Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*,' vol. i. *passim*. This is a recent and well-edited collection of the original documents referring to the trial.

should be put to the rack, in hopes of extorting further revelations, only two were found to vote in favour of this atrocious proposal, and of these two one was the traitor-priest L'Oiseleur ! It is said that one of our countrymen present at the trial was so much struck with the evident good faith of her replies that he could not forbear exclaiming, "A worthy woman—if she were only English !"*

Her judges, however, heedless of her innocence, or perhaps only the more inflamed by it, drew up twelve articles of accusation upon the grounds of sorcery and heresy, which articles were eagerly confirmed by the University of Paris. On the 24th of May, 1431—the very day on which Joan had been taken prisoner the year before—she was led to the churchyard before Saint Ouen, where two scaffolds had been raised ; on the one stood the Cardinal of Winchester, the Bishop of Beauvais, and several prelates ; the other was designed for the Maid, and for a preacher named Erard. The preacher then began his sermon, which was filled with the most vehement invectives against herself ; these she bore with perfect patience, but when he came to the words, "Your King, that heretic and that schismatic," she could not forbear exclaiming aloud, "Speak of me, but do not speak of the King—he is a good Christian By my faith, sir, I can swear to you, as my life shall answer for it, that he is the noblest of all Christians, and not such as you say." The Bishop of Beauvais, much

* "C'est une bonne femme—si elle était Anglaise !"—*Supplément aux Mémoires*, Collection, vol. viii. p. 294.

incensed, directed the guards to stop her voice, and the preacher proceeded. At his conclusion, a formula of abjuration was presented to Joan for her signature. It was necessary, in the first place, to explain to her what was the meaning of the word abjuration; she then exclaimed that she had nothing to abjure, for that whatever she had done was at the command of God; but she was eagerly pressed with arguments and with entreaties to sign. At the same time the prelates pointed to the public hangman, who stood close by in his car, ready to bear her away to instant death if she refused. Thus urged, Joan said at length, "I would rather sign than burn," and put her mark to the paper.* The object, however, was to sink her in public estimation; and with that view, by another most unworthy artifice, a much fuller and more explicit confession of her errors was afterwards made public, instead of the one which had been read to her, and which she had really signed.

The submission of Joan having been thus extorted, the Bishop of Beauvais proceeded to pass sentence in the name of the tribunal. He announced to her, that out of "grace and moderation" her life should be spared, but that the remainder of it must be passed in prison "with the bread of grief and the water of anguish for her food."† Joan heard the sentence unmoved, saying only, "Well, then,

* Deposition, at the Trial of Revision, of Massieu, a priest and rural dean, who had stood by her side on the scaffold.—Quicherat, 'Procès,' vol. i. p. 8.

† "Au pain de douleurs et à l'eau d'angoisse."—Collection des *Mémoires*, vol. viii. p. 304.

ye men of the church, lead me to your own prisons, and let me no longer remain in the hands of these English." But she was taken back to the same dungeon as before.

Nor was it designed that her life should indeed be spared. Her enemies only hoped, by a short delay and a pretended lenity, to palliate the guilt of her murder, or to heap a heavier load upon her memory. She had promised to resume a female dress; and it is related that a suit of men's apparel was placed in her cell, and her own removed during the night, so that she had no other choice next morning but to clothe herself again in the forbidden garments. Such is the common version of the story. But we greatly fear that a darker and a sadder tale remains behind. A priest, named Martin l'Advenu, who was allowed to receive her confession at this period, and to shrive her in her dying moments, was afterwards examined at the trial of revision, and declared that an English lord (*un millourt d'Angleterre*) had entered her prison and attempted violence; that on his departure she was found with her lace disfigured and in tears; and that she had resumed men's apparel as a more effectual safeguard to her honour.*

But whether the means employed in this infamous transaction were of fraud or of force, the object was clearly the same—to find a pretext for further rigour. For, according to the rules of the

* Compare Sismondi, vol. xiii. p. 190, with the 'Supplément aux Mémoires' (Collection, vol. viii. p. 304).

Inquisition, it was not heresy in the first instance, but only a relapse into heresy, that could be punished with death. No sooner then was the Bishop of Beauvais apprized of Joan's change of dress, than he hastened to the prison to convict her of the fact. He asked her whether she had heard "her Voices" again? "I have," answered Joan; "St. Catherine and St. Margaret have reproved me for my weakness in signing the abjuration, and commanded me to resume the dress which I wore by the appointment of God." This was enough; the Bishop and his compeers straightway pronounced her a heretic relapsed; no pardon could now be granted—scarce any delay allowed.

At daybreak, on the 30th of May, her confessor, Martin l'Advenu, was directed to enter her cell, and prepare her for her coming doom—to be burned alive that very day in the market-place of Rouen. At first hearing this barbarous sentence, the Maid's firmness forsook her for some moments; she burst into piteous cries, and tore her hair in agony, loudly appealing to God, "the great Judge," against the wrongs and cruelties done her. But ere long regaining her serene demeanour, she made her last confession to the priest, and received the Holy Sacrament from his hands. At nine o'clock, having been ordered to array herself for the last time in female attire, she was placed in the hangman's car, with her confessor and some other persons, and was escorted to the place of execution by a party of *English soldiers*. As she passed, there happened another

touching incident to this touching story; the fore-sworn priest, the wretched L'Oiseleur, who had falsely sought her confidence, and betrayed her confession, now moved by deep remorse, threw himself in her way to own his guilt and implore her forgiveness.* At the market-place (it is now adorned by a statue to her memory) she found the wood ready piled, and the Bishop of Beauvais with the Cardinal of Winchester and other prelates awaiting their victim. First a sermon was read, and then her sentence; at this her tears flowed afresh, but she knelt down to pray with her confessor, and asked for a cross. There was none at hand, and one was sent for to a neighbouring church; meanwhile an English soldier made another by breaking his staff asunder, and this cross she devoutly clasped to her breast. But the other soldiers were already murmuring at these long delays: "How now, priest," said they to L'Advenu; "do you mean to make us dine here?" At length their fierce impatience was indulged; the ill-fated woman was bound to the stake, and upon her head was placed a mitre with the following words inscribed:—

"HERETIQUE RELAPSE, APOSTATE, IDOLATRE."

The Bishop of Beauvais drew nigh just after the pile was kindled; "It is you," said she to him, "who have brought me to this death." To the very last, as L'Advenu states in his deposition, she continued to protest and maintain that her Voices were

* "Some time afterwards he fled to Basle, where he died suddenly."—Quicherat, 'Procès,' vol. i. p. 6.

true and unfeigned, and that in obeying them she had obeyed the will of God. As the flames increased, she bid L'Advenu stand further from her side, but still hold the cross aloft, that her latest look on earth might fall on the Redeemer's blessed sign. And the last word which she was heard to speak ere she expired was—JESUS. Several of the prelates and assessors had already withdrawn in horror from the sight, and others were melted to tears. But the Cardinal of Winchester, still unmoved, gave orders that the ashes and bones of "the heretic" should be collected and cast into the Seine. Such was the end of Joan of Arc—in her death the martyr, as in her life the champion, of her country.

It seems natural to ask what steps the King of France had taken during all this interval to avert her doom. If ever there had been a sovereign indebted to a subject, that sovereign was Charles VII., that subject Joan of Arc. She had raised the spirits of his people from the lowest depression. She had retrieved his fortunes when well nigh despaired of by himself. Yet, no sooner was she captive than she seems forgotten. We hear nothing of any attempt at rescue, of any proposal for ransom; neither the most common protest against her trial, nor the faintest threat of reprisals; nay, not even, after her death, one single expression of regret! Charles continued to slumber in his delicious retreats beyond the Loire, engrossed by dames of a very different *character* from Joan's, and careless of the heroine to *whom* his security in that indolence was due.

Her memory on the other hand was long endeared to the French people, and long did they continue to cherish a romantic hope that she might still survive. So strong was this feeling, that in the year 1436 advantage was taken of it by a female impostor, who pretended to be Joan of Arc escaped from her captivity. She fixed her abode at Metz, and soon afterwards married a knight of good family, the Sire des Armoises. Strange to say, it appears from a contemporary chronicle that Joan's two surviving brothers acknowledged this woman as their sister.* Stranger still, other records prove that she made two visits to Orleans, one before and one after her marriage, and on each occasion was hailed as the heroine returned. The Receiver-General's accounts in that city contain items of expenses incurred—1st, for the reception of the Maid and her brother in 1436; 2ndly, for wines and refreshments presented “à Dame Jehanne des Armoises,” in July, 1439; 3rdly, for a gift of 210 livres, which the Town Council made to the lady on the 1st of August following, in requital of her great services during the siege.† These documents appear of undoubted authenticity, yet we are wholly unable to explain them. The brothers of Joan of Arc might possibly have hopes of profit by the fraud; but how the people of Orleans, who had seen her so closely, who had fought side by side with her in the siege,

* Chronicle of the Dean of St. Thiebault of Metz, ending in 1445, as cited by Calmet, ‘*Histoire de Lorraine*,’ vol. ii. p. 702.

† *Collection des Mémoires*, vol. viii. p. 311.

could be deceived as to the person, we cannot understand, nor yet what motive they could have in deceiving.

The interest which Joan of Arc inspires at the present day extends even to the house where she dwelt, and to the family from which she sprung. Her father died of grief at the tidings of her execution; her mother long survived it, but fell into great distress. Twenty years afterwards we find her in receipt of a pension from the city of Orleans; three francs a month, "to help her to live."* Joan's brothers and their issue took the name of Du Lis, from the Lily of France, which the King had assigned as their arms. It is said by a writer of the last century that their lineage ended in Cou-lombe du Lis, Prior of Coutras, who died in 1760. Yet we learn that there is still a family at Nancy, and another at Strasburg, which bear the name of Du Lis, and which put forth a pedigree to prove themselves the relatives—not, as a modern traveller unguardedly expresses it, the descendants!—of the holy Maid.

The cottage in which Joan had lived at Domremy was visited by Montaigne in his travels. He found the front daubed over with rude paintings of her exploits, and in its vicinity beheld "*l'Arbre des Fées*," which had so often shaded her childhood, still flourishing in a green old age, under the new name of "*l'Arbre de la Pucelle*." Gradually, the remains of

* *Pour lui aider à vivre.* Compte-rendu d'un Receveur d'Orléans.
—Préface de Buchon, p. 66; and Sismondi, vol. xiii. p. 183.

this house have dwindled to one single room, which is said to have been Joan's, and which, in the year 1817, was employed as a stable; but we rejoice to learn that the Council-General of the Department has since, with becoming spirit, purchased the venerable tenement, and rescued it from such unworthy uses.*

From the preceding narrative it will be easy to trace the true character of Joan. A thorough and earnest persuasion that hers was the rightful cause—that in all she had said she spoke the truth—that in all she did she was doing her duty—a courage that did not shrink before embattled armies or beleaguered walls, or judges thirsting for her blood—a serenity amidst wounds and sufferings, such as the great poet of Tuscany ascribes to the dauntless usurper of Naples:—

“Now behold!” he said, and showed
High on his breast a wound; then smiling spake,
“I am Manfredi!”†

—a most resolute will on all points that were connected with her mission—perfect meekness and humility on all that were not—a clear, plain sense, that could confound the casuistry of sophists—an ardent loyalty, such as our own Charles I. inspired—a dutiful devotion, on all points, to her country and to God. Nowhere do modern annals display a character more pure—more generous—more humble amidst fancied visions and undoubted victories—more free from all taint of selfishness—more akin to

* Collection des Mémoires, vol. viii. p. 214.

† Dante, ‘Purgatorio,’ canto iii. Mr. Cary’s version.

the champions and martyrs of old times. All this is no more than justice and love of truth would require us to say. But when we find some French historians, transported by an enthusiasm almost equal to that of Joan herself, represent her as filling the part of a general or statesman—as skilful in leading armies, or directing councils—we must withhold our faith. Such skill, indeed, from a country girl, without either education or experience, would be, had she really possessed it, scarcely less supernatural than the visions which she claimed. But the facts are far otherwise. In affairs of state Joan's voice was never heard: in affairs of war all her proposals will be found to resolve themselves into two—either to rush headlong upon the enemy, often in the very point where he was strongest, or to offer frequent and public prayers to the Almighty. We are not aware of any single instance in which her military suggestions were not these, or nearly akin to these. Nay, more, as we have elsewhere noticed, her want of knowledge and of capacity to command were so glaring, that scarce one of the chiefs, or princes, or prelates, who heard her in council or familiar conversation, appears to have retained, beyond the few first days, the slightest faith in her mission. At best, they regarded her as a useful tool in their hands, from the influence which they saw her wield upon the army and the people. And herein lies, we think, a further proof of her perfect honesty of purpose. A deliberate impostor is most likely to deceive those on *whom he has opportunity and leisure to play his*

artifices, while the crowd beyond the reach of them most commonly remains unmoved. Now, the very reverse of this was always the case with Joan of Arc.

The fate of Joan, in literature, has been strange—almost as strange as her fate in life. The ponderous cantos of Chapelain in her praise have long since perished—all but a few lines that live embalmed in the satires of Boileau. But, besides Schiller's powerful drama, two considerable narrative poems yet survive with Joan of Arc for their subject—the epic of Southey and the epic of Voltaire. The one, a young poet's earnest and touching tribute to heroic worth—the first flight of the muse that was, ere long, to soar over India and Spain; the other, full of ribaldry and blasphemous jests, holding out the Maid of Orleans as a fitting mark for slander and derision. But from whom did these far different poems proceed? The shaft of ridicule came from a French—the token of respect from an English—hand!

Of Joan's person no authentic resemblance now remains. A statue to her memory had been raised upon the bridge at Orleans, at the sole charge—so said the inscription—of the matrons and maids of that city: this probably preserved some degree of likeness, but unfortunately perished in the religious wars of the sixteenth century. There is no portrait extant; the two earliest engravings are of 1606 and 1612, and they greatly differ from each other. Yet, who would not readily ascribe to Joan in fancy the very form and features so exquisitely moulded by a

young princess? Who that has ever trodden the gorgeous galleries of Versailles has not fondly lingered before that noble work of art—before that touching impersonation of the Christian heroine—the head meekly bended, and the hands devoutly clasping the sword in sign of the cross, but firm resolution imprinted on that close-pressed mouth, and beaming from that lofty brow?—Whose thoughts, as he paused to gaze and gaze again, might not sometimes wander from old times to the present, and turn to the sculptress—sprung from the same Royal lineage which Joan had risen in arms to restore—so highly gifted in talent, in fortunes, in hopes of happiness—yet doomed to an end so grievous and untimely? Thus the statue has grown to be a monument, not only to the memory of the Maid, but to her own: thus future generations in France—all those, at least, who know how to prize either genius or goodness in woman—will love to blend together the two names—the female artist with the female warrior—MARY OF WURTEMBERG and JOAN OF ARC.







